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Rose of the world

M. C. Martin

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ROSE OF THE WORLD

ROSE OF THE WORLD

BY

M. C. MARTIN

Author of "The Other Miss Lisle"



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Rose of the World

CHAPTER I.

A LOVER OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

"THAT child! I don't know why she is so queer. She certainly don't take after me nor my family. My father was an artist—a real artist—and so was *his* father before him. My sister was a prima donna in England. I do assure you, Mrs. Jaffe, I am wondering every day more and more why Rosamond is so strange."

Mrs. Molyneaux sighed deeply, and drank some tea out of one of her best china cups, brought out to honor the occasion. She did not like tea, but "afternoon coffee" was out of the question when so fashionable a visitor as Mrs. Jaffe was to be entertained.

"She's delicate, Mrs. Molyneaux," said that lady soothingly. "The child does look white and thin."

"No, she's never ill, I do assure you, Mrs. Jaffe," said the hostess quickly; "she's never had a day's illness since she got over the measles three years

ago. But she's difficult to work with, sometimes. Takes after her father in having a poor appetite. Takes after him in most things."

Mrs. Molyneaux sighed and implied that these facts were the trials of her life.

The subject of their remarks was seated on a chair at the window overlooking the street.

"Rosamond, come here!" called her mother, sharply. The child rose languidly and came to where her mother sat, with an air of toleration that sat oddly enough on her small face. Her years numbered eleven, but she looked older. A small white face, startling in its pallor, large eyes that were dark, but neither brown nor black, small regular features that might have been pretty had they not been so pinched, and straggling light hair of an indefinite shade. She was dressed in a tawdry red-plush frock, trimmed elaborately with lace that was once white, but was now soiled, and being torn in several places hung in festoons over her shoulders.

The child glanced from one face to the other seriously, and still with that odd look of forbearance. She had a book in her hands with one small sun-burnt finger between the leaves, to keep the place at which she had been interrupted.

"Look at her, Mrs. Jaffe!" exclaimed her mother, with a wave of her massive hand toward the child. "I took her to a concert last night. I want her to know what is good music, and what is not. I will not have that she grows up and tells me I have not made her to understand what is worth talking about in music or in anything beautiful."

"Quite right," murmured Mrs. Jaffe, and helped herself to another jam-tart.

"I took her to a concert," continued Rosamond's mother dramatically, "and the music! Ach, but it was artistic! It brought the tears to my eyes. I have such a heart for beautiful things. I say to Rosamond, 'My child,' I say, 'do you feel the music touch your heart? When that gentleman plays the violin, do you feel the tears come to your eyes, and do you feel you was in heaven, with the angels?' That is what I said, Mrs. Jaffe."

"And I'm sure she liked the lovely music," said Mrs. Jaffe with a smile at Rosamond, that was meant to be winning. Rosamond looked at her quite gravely and steadily and there was something disconcerting in those eyes of hers. They seemed to pierce the surface-politeness of

Mrs. Jaffe, and set its proper value on the smile.

"Like it!" exclaimed Mrs. Molyneaux tragically. "Like it! Why, would you believe, my dear friend, she sat there and said quite loud, 'He's got shoes on that are new and they pinch. That's why he looks so miserable and makes his fiddle screech so.'"

Rosamond's mother looked for sympathy and got it.

"Fie! Fie! What a naughty thing for a little girl to say! Are you not sorry now, my dear, for saying that? Tell mother you are sorry." Mrs. Jaffe put out a hand covered with a black cotton glove and caught the child by the arm. She bent down over her with another winning smile, but there was a piece of jam at the side of her mouth, and Rosamond was thinking of its effect upon her face. There was a sudden flash of mirth in the solemn dark eyes; it came and went like lightning. Mrs. Jaffe saw it, though, and felt uncomfortable, she could not tell why.

"Tell mother you are sorry!" she said again.

"I don't think it would be any use," said the child, with the air of one who had decided on the same suggestion before it occurred to Mrs. Jaffe.

"What a very strange little girl you are, my dear!" said Mrs. Jaffe.

Rosamond looked as if the same thing had been said to her before—frequently—which was the case. Her mother smiled.

"I don't know how ever I came to have such a queer child. She don't take after my side of the family, that's certain. It's her father. He says, she looks like a sister of his whose name was Bridget. That is why Rosamond has the name. Her father wanted her first name to be Bridget, but it was too ugly to please me, so she has it for a second name. But my dear friend, I did not finish yet about last night. Quite a common person behind us heard what Rosamond said—a man, Mrs. Jaffe, a vulgar-looking creature, I do assure you. He says 'The little one is right, ma'am. She knows when music is music and when it is same as cats on the roof.' I *was* annoyed. I asked him politely to attend to his own affairs. By this time nearly everybody round us was looking at us. The man said 'No offense, ma'am,' but I took no notice of him. And that child," with another wave of a large red hand, "that child sat there and smiled till I could have slapped her, if it had not been for the place

I was in. When I looked at her again she was asleep."

Mrs. Jaffe uttered a series of noises, indicative of pained surprise, and uplifted her hands and eyes spasmodically, Rosamond watching her curiously the while.

"And she so young!" exclaimed her mother. "Eleven her next birthday. What she'll turn out when she's older I'm afraid to think."

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Jaffe.

"All she cares about," continued her mother, with something approaching a groan, "is her dolls and story books. I have to drag her to the piano to her music, for she's always stuck away in a corner with a book. What book's that you've got?" Mrs. Molyneaux made a dart at the book in the child's hand. "Alice in Wonderland! What rubbish! If 'twas your lesson book itself! It's all her father's doing," continued Rosamond's mother. "He spoils her terrible."

"It's a pity, it's a pity. Now my little Thireza, who's just her age, is so different. So fond of her music is that child! She's out of the house before eight o'clock in the morning for her music practice at the school. I can't let her practice by the house, for her father don't like

the piano going in the morning. He's a delicate stomach, Jaffe, and squeamish-like till he's had his breakfast. But my little Thireza, as I say, is up at the dawn and out to her music without any trouble."

Rosamond looked at the speaker gravely. She knew something of Thireza Jaffe, for they went to the same school. Thireza was frequently late for school—even when she left home before eight o'clock in the morning. But Rosamond had learned, early in life, the wisdom of silence.

"Oh, she's up time enough, especially since Mr. Fortescue's come here. *He* spoils her too, and between him and her father—" Words failed, or perhaps Mrs. Molyneaux's dramatic instinct suggested the pause.

"That Mr. Fortescue seems a nice young man, but delicate. He's here for his health, you say?" Mrs. Jaffe seized upon a more interesting topic, and Mrs. Molyneaux, having for the time exhausted the subject of her only daughter's behavior, ordered her sharply from the room, and took up the new subject with avidity.

"Yes, he's here for his health. He was at college, Cambridge I believe, and he over-studied himself and the doctors ordered him to spend a

summer at the Cape. His father and my husband were chums at school—the same Cambridge College. His father was Squire Fortescue, and his mother was a Lyddon, and Molyneaux tells me—and I believe him, for he knew them, too, grew up among them—he tells me the Lyddons were all rich. This Mr. Fortescue will be heir to his grandfather's property; old Sir Humphrey Lyddon has adopted him since his own father died."

Mrs. Molyneaux rolled off her sentences breathlessly and with occasional lapses in grammar, due to the fact that she was a Swiss, and English was a foreign language to her, despite the experience of thirty years in its use.

Her listener was duly impressed—as Mrs. Molyneaux meant her to be. Mrs. Jaffe might, as the wife of a wealthy Jew, be inclined to look down on the wife of a poverty-stricken architect whose only claim to distinction was the existence of certain "good connections at home," a mythical relationship too intangible for the contradiction of poverty abroad. The appearance of this young Englishman in the Molyneaux household was the first proof of the truth of Mrs. Molyneaux's untiring boast of the husband's aristocratic relations in England.

Mrs. Molyneaux explained with a wealth of detail how this young Justin Fortescue was to be their guest for the whole summer; of the notice he took of Rosamond; of how the child worshiped him—these latter facts were given with a mixture of complacency and annoyance—of how her husband had been shamed into “steadiness” by the presence of this eminently aristocratic “connection” from England.

And Mrs. Jaffe listened, shrewdly discounting what gratified vanity exaggerated in the relation of her hostess.

“You must bring him to one of our little evenings,” she said as she rose to take her leave. “Is he fond of music?”

“He plays beautifully himself—and sings,” said Mrs. Molyneaux with a superior smile. She had not half exhausted her subject, but the rest would keep. She had given Mrs. Jaffe and her five marriageable daughters enough to discuss for a day or two, she told herself, with a considerable amount of triumph.

“Oh, then you know *we* all love music, so please bring him. He is not one for ceremony, I hope?”

“I believe he’s been accustomed to a great deal

of ceremoniousness in his own home," said Mrs. Molyneaux grandly. "But," with a sudden change of tone, "he's every inch a gentleman and he's as easy to get on with as though he was nobody."

Which, from long experience, Mrs. Jaffe interpreted as the speaker meant.

They had reached the hall door by this time, and they had shaken hands three times on the slow progress from the "drawing-room" to the hall.

"Why, bless me! There's Mr. Fortescue coming up the street!" exclaimed Mrs. Molyneaux suddenly, as her keen glance swept the portion of the street visible from her doorstep. Mrs. Jaffe turned and looked at the young man who came up the pavement. He was tall, thin, and dark-haired; he had the unmistakable air and bearing of a gentleman; so much she saw in the first piercing glance. She waited until he came to the stoop to extend her observations.

"Back already!" exclaimed Mrs. Molyneaux in an overpoweringly friendly tone, beaming at the newcomer in a motherly way. "My! you didn't stay long!"

Justin Fortescue raised his straw hat, and there

was a pleasant boyish smile on his handsome face.

"No," he said, "both Mrs. and Miss D'Uminy had gone for their afternoon drive. I will call again though."

Mrs. Molyneaux introduced him to her friend, who immediately plunged into a lively conversation, or—strictly speaking—monologue.

Justin listened with the same boyish look on his face—a mingling of good-natured amusement and a deferential gravity.

He had gray eyes, regular features, the mouth and chin especially suggestive of strength in reserve and power under a smiling exterior. His face still bore traces of the healthy tan acquired on his voyage to the Cape. Still there was a suggestion of delicacy, though it was difficult to say whence it arose.

He listened with polite deference to Mrs. Jaffe's overtures, and smiled once or twice in a way not quite justified by what that good lady was saying at the moment. But Mrs. Jaffe saw none of that, being too anxious in her volubility to create a good impression. She told her daughters that evening with much emphasis that "There was no mistaking *him* for anything but a

gentleman. One could see he had been brought up in the *best* society. None of your varnished specimens like some of our acquaintances, but solid through and through."

And Justin Fortescue sat down that evening to write home his experiences. One letter was to Sir Humphrey Lyddon, his grandfather; the other was to Ronald Hardy, and bore a London address.

CHAPTER II.

"FAIRY BRIDE."

No. 7 Dunstable Street, Cape Town,

3rd September, 1903.

FROM JUSTIN FORTESCUE TO MRS. CRAYTHORNE.

MY DEAR AUNT HELEN:

My letter with an account of the voyage will have reached you by this time. Here I am, established with your friend, Mr. Molyneaux, and I know you will want a full and candid account of everybody and everything in my new surroundings.

Let me say right here (you won't mind my slang, I know) that it is a mistake to form ideas of persons before you meet them. Mr. Molyneaux is not at all what my fancy—aided by your early reminiscences—had painted him. You told me he was in his youth a brilliant man, handsome, accomplished, fascinating, did you not? Well, he has changed beyond *your* recognition, that's certain.

And Mrs. Molyneaux! You particularly want

a description of her? She is a Swiss, with a very imperfect knowledge of English; a tall, largely-built woman, plainly older than her husband by a good many years, but handsome still in a florid fashion. When I tell you that it is quite visible that neither husband nor child can call their souls their own, you may glean her character.

It is a queer household; Mrs. Molyneaux makes up three-quarters of it, the remaining and very insignificant quarter being made up of Mr. Molyneaux, Rosamond (I call her Bride, for her second name is Bridget), a black maid named Anna, and a "Cape boy" named Rufus.

To me Mrs. Molyneaux is obsequious to almost an unpleasant degree. She overwhelms me with attention, for which I try to be grateful and accept gracefully, but she grates on me outrageously. Mr. Molyneaux is a mere wreck of what undoubtedly was a brilliant scholar and a perfect gentleman. In his own household he seems to lose all manliness; out of his wife's vicinity he is more himself. I find it quite impossible to conceive a more pitiable situation than his. This news of him will make, I know, you sad, for you have thought kindly of him after all the years that have elapsed since he took up

the prodigal's portion. Poor fellow, I wonder what made him marry such a termagant, when he could have stayed at home and married in his own rank.

But their little girl interests me most of all. Just think, Aunt Helen, of a child with the instinctive refinement of her father's people, and possessing that artistic temperament with its blessing and its bane, that you and I were discussing six weeks ago—possessing it in an extreme degree, and set in such surroundings, with such a mother! You would pity—and love—the child. Her mother's one aim in life is to have Bride learn to strum the piano, and she has not a note of music in her composition—not that kind of music anyhow.

It seems Mrs. Molyneaux's father was a musician and her sister a music-hall *artiste* some years ago in England, and Mrs. Molyneaux has caught some of the jargon of the provincial æsthete, which she expresses in very wobbly English, thinking herself, meanwhile, wasted on a Cape Town world, but in reality with no more notion of true art than a turnip.

My blood boils sometimes at her wilful misunderstanding of the child. No love, no kindness,

no sympathy, no amusement, but the constant crushing of her natural tendencies and a forcing of unnatural ones.

The child is not pretty; and she seems delicate, though her mother prides herself on having made her "hardy."

The child's gratitude to me is very touching for having brought her a few books: Alice in Wonderland, Grimm's Fairy Tales and Uncle Remus. The latter I read aloud for her, and she sits and listens, with those wonderful dark eyes of hers fixed on me all the time. Though not pretty now, she will be a beautiful woman—if she lives. She has such eyes—so strange and I think beautiful, with almost a woman's sympathy and understanding in them at times.

They are poor, these people. I think my presence among them is too severe a strain on the domestic purse. When I arrived, and saw how things were, I hesitated about accepting their cordial invitation, but Mrs. Molyneaux overruled my objections, so here I am still, enjoying myself hugely in an experience of society I am not likely to meet with again.

I went to a party last night. It was what our hostess, Mrs. Jaffe, called "one of our little even-

ings." Mrs. J. is a Jewess, or of Jewish extraction—for she is neither a good Jew nor a bad Christian. She professes to belong to the Church of England and to despise the Synagogue.

To this lady's house I went with Mrs. Molyneaux. There were five daughters of the house waiting to receive us in a small room—pretty, Jewish-looking girls, all very lively and agreeable. There were two or three other ladies, rather elderly, the appallingly-Jewish father of the five fair ones and three or four other men. We had "a little music"—one of the daughters plays pretty well, and one of the men sang very loudly and very nervously. When Mrs. Molyneaux told them I could "make a little music" I was pressed by the whole crowd, except the nervous man—to "play something."

Then we had "a little conversation." The space at disposal was very limited. A fellow couldn't move without walking on a woman's skirts or another fellow's toes, but they all seemed used to it, and the five fair ones laughed good-humoredly at everything—and nothing. This room was insufferably hot, though the window was wide open and unshuttered.

How shall I tolerate the heat of summer if this

is only spring! It is being seedy, I suppose, that makes a fellow feel every trifle like an old woman. I fanned one of the daughters by way of excuse for fanning myself—a jolly little girl, with dark soft eyes and pretty teeth, but Jewish about the nose.

Some of the others had a game of "Consequences." Do you know it or did you ever hear of it? It seemed to make occasion for much laughter and some blushing on the part of the shy young man with the loud voice, who is evidently smitten with one of the five. Then we had a "little more music" and the party broke up decorously at eleven o'clock. In the middle of it all I fancied Sir Humphrey coming upon me there—I saw his face—and the jolly little girl asked what I was laughing at with my eyes—I did not laugh aloud.

If he knew! But he doesn't and he won't, for I feel sure you will not tell him. I shall stay here some time longer, because of Bride and old Molyneux himself, who is not a bad soul when he's sober. I showed Bride your photo and the queer little thing looked at it solemnly for a long time; then she kissed it passionately.

"I could love *her*," she said. Poor small girlie!

She has not much kind affection to boast of. Her father worships her of course, but is too brow-beaten himself to take her part against his wife.

There are still my impressions of Cape Town to be told you, but they will keep and develop as I mean to go about a good deal during the next few weeks. Mrs. D'Uminy was not at home when I called, but this morning brought a note from her asking me to dinner there this evening, so I'm going. Did I tell you that I am fit as a fiddle-string—lost that feeling of all-overishness, and am brown as any Cape boy! You know what that means.

Write soon to your scrapegrace nephew,

JUSTIN.

When he had finished this letter Justin Fortescue looked at his watch, and finding it was close on six o'clock, started up to dress for the dinner to which he had been invited. The people to whom he was going were friends of his aunt's. They had been to England in the summer, previous to his arrival at the Cape, and Mrs. Dinsley Craythorne had introduced them to what they were pleased to call "the best society."

They were wealthy, these D'Uminys, and

claimed descent from aristocratic Huguenot ancestors; but a century of dilution had considerably weakened the ancestral strain of blue-blood. The present representatives of the family were ambitiously English in feeling and sentiment, while persistently claiming the ancestral Huguenots; and they saw no inconsistency in that, or in ignoring a hundred years of Dutch forefathers.

Justin had been at college and had not met them while they were in England; but when some four months later the doctors recommended South Africa for him, Mrs. Craythorne had thought her of the D'Uminys as possible friends for him, and had given him a letter of introduction to them, as well as to Eustace Molyneaux.

Mrs. Craythorne of Dinsley Park did not realize to what a household she was introducing her nephew when she asked Eustace Molyneaux to take charge of the lad while he was at the Cape. The Eustace Molyneaux of her acquaintance had been one of the best known and most admired men in her own circle before her marriage. It was she herself, beautiful Helen Fortescue, who had been the innocent cause of his leaving his native land, never to return. For he had loved

her then, and vainly. When she refused him he became reckless, and the years, twenty of them, had made him what he was to-day. There was in Mrs. Craythorne's heart still that lingering of old-time kindness and regret which a woman feels for a good man who has loved her without a return.

To her, who had not seen him for twenty years, Molyneaux was a very different man from the one whom Justin found waiting for him at the Cape Town docks.

Justin himself realized that, but with boyish love of new experiences, and a certain democratic spirit on which he rather prided himself, he accepted the hospitality offered him.

But he was glad of an opportunity of widening his experience of Cape social life by the invitation from the D'Uminys.

Whistling and singing snatches of songs as he moved about his small room, he did not know that outside his door was a small figure waiting patiently until he should be finished.

It was Rosamond. She had something held very carefully in her hands, and covered with white tissue-paper.

Now and then she stopped to draw in the per-

fume issuing from an open corner of the paper, and to peep in at the violets contained therein. She had got those violets at considerable risk of life and limb, and by methods darkly known to herself—yet, as she would have told you with a flash of fearless eyes—quite lawfully.

There was a gleam of intense satisfaction in those same eyes, and a quivering, expectant smile on the mobile lips as she listened to the singer within. It was dark in the passage, and her mother was downstairs and had not missed her—two facts which gave her comfort.

Presently the door opened and Justin stopped on his way out, amazed at the sight of her. He was in evening dress, and the child's eyes widened with admiration.

"Why, Bride, did you knock? I did not know you were there."

The young fellow's voice was very pleasant, to the child it seemed somehow as if the song rang through it still.

"No, I didn't knock. I waited. I brought these. Will you put them in your coat?"

She spoke in a low, hurried tone, and uncovered the violets with quick, eager fingers, holding them out to him.

"Violets—as I live! Why do you know I was just wishing I had a few for a button-hole. They are my favorite flowers. And lo! here comes my fairy Bride with some in her hands!"

The child laughed; but softly, mindful of maternal ears.

"Put them in," she said, her eyes dancing. "You look—scrumptious!" She ended with a small sigh of delight as her glance ran over him, quick as lightning. He laughed then, not ill-pleased.

"You must put them in, my fairy Bride. There, stand on a chair."

"May I? Oh, may I? You *are* nice. You are just the very nicest *new* person I ever met."

She clambered eagerly on the nearest chair in the room, and he handed her back the small bunch of violets, and stood smilingly to be decorated.

"I've got a pin, too. I *thought* you might let me, but I didn't quite know. But you are nice, always! There!"

She pinned them in and pushed him back with two small hands to admire the effect, her head on one side, her cheeks flushed, her eyes shining.

"What a dear little midget you are!" said Justin, and stooping, he kissed her lightly.

Suddenly her face became grave, her eyes clouded over, and she got down from the chair in silence.

"Why, Bride, you're not angry with me, are you? Come, little girl, I thought we were friends." He stooped over her in surprise, bending his tall figure (too tall for his strength) to look into her face.

She lifted her eyes to him seriously. "I'm—I'm not angry—but nobody does—that—but father."

There was a quaint dignity in the tense uprightness of the small figure, and in the small set face.

"By Jove! And you won't let *me*? Well, then I'll promise not to do it again without asking leave. There, will that do? What a little Puritan you are!"

"Puritan! What's that? It's not nice, anyhow, I know by your voice. But I don't like you to—do that."

"No? Why, little girl, I am twice your age!" He smiled with some pardonable vanity.

Rosamond nodded. "I know," she said, "you

are twenty-two." Then, with a sudden change of look and tone, "Do you wear those clothes often when you are at home? You look nice. Just like the man that carries a table-napkin on his arm and stands behind the people's chairs in the hotel in Frere Street. What are you laughing at? You are always laughing."

"Am I? Well, you say I'm like a waiter. You've taken the starch out of my conceit."

He took a silk dust-coat from a chair and put his crush hat under his arm.

"Will the ladies be in dresses without any necks or sleeves?" questioned Rosamond, watching him, and trying to picture him eating his dinner in that snowy shirt-front.

Again he laughed.

"Don't know, little one. Probably they will."

At this juncture Mrs. Molyneaux's voice was heard calling Mr. Fortescue, and she herself was heard coming heavily up the stairs.

"There's mother!" exclaimed Rosamond, in a frightened whisper. "Don't tell her I gave you the violets. I hope you'll have a nice dinner. Good-by!"

She had gone up the passage in the dark in a

second. Justin was still smiling when he met Mrs. Molyneaux.

"Ready? The cab has just come. My! what a dandy you are! Violets, too, I declare. From *her?*" Mrs. Molyneaux delivered these sentences punctuated by gasps. The last question was asked with a knowing smile.

"Yes," answered Justin looking at them with much complacency, "from—Her!"

"Why, have you got one already? Trust you for that, though! I don't know where's the girl wouldn't be proud to give you their violets. Do I know her?"

This last insinuatingly. Justin laughed and made his way downstairs. He knew that a small figure was crouching somewhere up the dark passage and that two small ears were strained to catch his answer.

"Is that a fair question, Mrs. Molyneaux? Spare me, I beseech you! Please don't wait up for me. I'll probably be in by the last train, and, if they ask me, I'll sleep at Woodside."

Rosamond heaved a sigh of relief. "He's nice," she said to herself. "He *is* nice!"

"Oh, they'll ask you fast enough. You won't

want to stay much with us when you get in with the D'Uminy set." Mrs. Molyneaux spoke with an aggrieved air. "I know we haven't anything to keep you. Molyneaux is no fit companion for any young man."

Justin turned in the light of the hall lamp, and held out his hand. "I've never met with greater kindness than from you all," he said shaking hands, and bidding her good-night. It was just such graceful little speeches, said sincerely, that endeared Justin Fortescue to all who knew him.

CHAPTER III.

A SCHOOL BILL AND A SCHOOL BOY.

"ROSAMOND!"

The name was called in a cautious whisper, and the child looking eagerly into the night shadows—a silent, dark, motionless part of them herself—heard the call and went forward swiftly in the direction whence it came.

"Come on, father. All's well," she said with a small sigh of relief, as she crossed the strip of ground between the house and the street.

"Right, mavourneen."

A figure lurched out of the shadows of the blue-gum tree at the end of the garden—by courtesy so called—for it was a mere strip of sandy ground running in front of the house, separating it from the street and bounded by a low wooden railing.

"Where is she? I was kept late to-night." The man spoke more loudly now, but still with some caution. The child opened the little gate, and taking her father's hand led him to the house quickly, and with a certain protective air that sat oddly on her.

The hall was in darkness, but Rosamond led the way to the dining-room at the end of it. This was dimly lighted by a hanging lamp, which was turned low, and the air was heavy with the fumes of kerosene.

Eustace Molyneaux took off his cap and sat down on the nearest chair, the child meanwhile watching him keenly. Her father was looking about him uneasily, and his wavering glance came back to his daughter's face as the one likely to set his mind at rest.

"Your mother?" he cried, with a hand on each knee, leaning forward eagerly to whisper the word.

"She has gone to a concert with Mr. Fortescue. They won't be back until eleven o'clock. Have you had any supper?"

"No—yes—" he laughed feebly, "I don't know. It doesn't matter, mavourneen. I couldn't eat anything now. Gone to a concert, has she?" he chuckled. "Poor Fortescue."

He drew out his handkerchief and with unsteady hands mopped his forehead and brushed his moustache. He was a slightly-made man and though about middle height his shrunken figure and prematurely gray hair gave him a look of age beyond his years. His face still retained

traces of the good looks that had made him one of the handsomest men in London in the early sixties. But the traces of his besetting sin were written large upon him.

The child stood and looked at him.

"Could you not eat something, father? Anna has kept your supper for you. Wait, I'll get it."

She disappeared into the kitchen which she found empty, as Anna, the one domestic, had betaken herself to the back gate, where she was entertaining a youth a few shades darker than herself.

Rosamond re-entered the dining-room, bearing a covered dish, and with quick, deft movements she laid one end of the long dining-table, and then went and stood in front of her father.

"Come now!" she said coaxingly, and he rose and sat down at the place she had prepared for him.

There was a strangely old look on the child's face. She realized only too well that her father was not quite sober. She had seen him like this more times than she could number, and she regarded him with a tolerant love and a protecting pity that sat oddly on her sweet face.

"Eat," she said seating herself beside him, "I suppose you have had no food since the morning, father?"

He looked at her with a half-shamed expression.

"Why, little girl, I don't believe I have, now I come to think of it. But I'm not hungry, though I'll try to eat to please you."

He took up his knife and fork and made some show of eating.

"Do you know, mavourneen, I got fifty pounds to-day for some plans?"

"And how much have you got now?" asked Rosamond promptly.

"Ha, ha! What a little woman it is!" He leaned back in his chair and laughed. "How much have you got now, she says, as pat as nothing. Well, mavourneen, I've got enough to buy you anything you want anyhow!"

"You know I don't want anything for myself. How much can you give mother? And can you pay my school bill? It's owing for three months now."

"Of course I can pay it. How much is it? You must have it at once."

He drew out a pocket-book, and with very un-

steady hands began to put out the bank-notes it contained on the table.

"Seven pounds," said Rosamond. He counted it out and gave it to her.

"There now, little woman. That's all right? As to your mother—" he folded up the rest of the bank notes and put them away. "When she asks me as you do I'll give her what she wants."

There was a lordly severity in look and tone, but Rosamond was not deceived. She knew he would have to hand every penny of the money over to her mother—if she did not take it herself from his pocket when she came home.

This unpaid account at her school had made the child very unhappy. Sensitive to an intense degree, she fancied that her teachers looked askance at her because of the money due. She folded up the notes carefully and put them in her pocket. Her mother was not so particular about settling her school-account, and she knew it was more than probable that other use would be made of those seven pounds if her mother got them.

She turned her attention to her father again.

"You must take everything that is on the plate," she said, firmly, when he stopped again.

Her father laughed good-naturedly. He was never anything but good-natured and kindly to her. He loved the child passionately. Had she been older, her influence might perhaps have saved him from the dire end to which he was hastening all too rapidly, driven by the sense of his life's failure and haunted by the dread of the woman who was his wife.

As it was, her childish hands bound him to his duty as her bread-winner. If, as it happened, in the wild desire to throw off his wife's control, he formed designs of disappearing and losing himself from her ken in Rhodesia or Bechuana-land, the love he bore to Rosamond kept him still in Cape Town and sent him daily to his office.

Despite his dissipated habits he was still sufficiently master of his fine brain to be in demand as an architect. The child realized dimly that her father's marriage had been the fatal mistake of his life, and in her childish way strove to atone for her own existence. "If mother was different, father would be different," she would say to herself, with the wisdom taught by daily experience. She would have loved her mother with the strong affection of her passionate little heart, but her mother did not understand her. She seemed to

be of different clay. Her mother, while without cause for punishment or complaint, felt the child's heart was estranged from her. She would have had Rosamond like herself; she was like her father, like him and his in everything. And while loudly voicing the superiority of herself and her ancestors over the Molyneaux she did not know, instinctively she felt inferior.

Oh, it was a strange childhood! What wonder that Justin Fortescue's kindly nature went out in real sympathy to her! Had she been coarse-grained as her mother was, the sympathy would not have been needed; but he saw the delicacy, the intuitive refinement, the ardent, passionate, sensitive nature, and knew that as she grew older, this life would crush her spirit and blight her earnest striving.

In his saner moods her father too, realized somewhat of this.

"I will send you to England, mavourneen, to be educated as befits a Molyneaux," he would say to the child. "But not yet. I can not spare you yet." And Rosamond looked forward to the time when she should see her father's native land; looked forward too, in dreams, to the glorious time when she could study and be learned like

him—a worthy Molyneaux, as he would have said. If doubts as to the mother's consent to these arrangements came to darken her dreams she put them aside.

With the happy optimism of childhood she believed "mother" would be different by that time. Had not something very beautiful come into her life with the coming of Justin Fortescue? He could make her mother give wonderful extensions of play hours in the evenings and unheard-of relaxations of discipline. He was a new and delightful person in her small sordid world, with his well-clad figure, his handsome face, his kind ways, his generous gifts. He was the embodiment of the prince of her fairy-tales, and it was her delight to picture for him a dazzlingly-beautiful princess and a kingdom wherein to rule. She herself might perhaps, if he asked mother, be the princess' waiting-maid.

But of these dreams she told no one a word. She lived in her own world of visions, forgetful, happily for the time, of jarring and discord, of poverty and misunderstanding—of everything that made her childhood hard to bear.

And yet by force of circumstances another side of her nature was brought into play. She was not

all a dreamer and childish visionary. She set herself now in an eminently practical way to get her father to go to bed before her mother returned.

The child dreaded the idea of the scene she knew from past experience there would be, if her mother came back before he had disappeared upstairs. When she had satisfactorily accomplished her task she crept into bed herself, and, tired out, fell asleep.

* * * * *

“Rosie! Ros-ee! I say, Ro-see! Oh, hang! Why can’t you stop? Well, Roz—a—mond, then!”

At last the small, dignified figure, carrying a wicker school-basket, condescended to pause in her march down the street toward home.

She turned and waited for a small boy, the owner of the stentorian voice that filled the air with her name. Her name was *not* Rosie, she had told him more than once, with considerable indignation, and Walter Matheson knew that was one way of teasing her. He knew a variety of ways.

“Hi, I say! Why couldn’t you wait for a

fella'? Guess what!" broke out Walter breathlessly.

He had run nearly the whole length of Dunstable Street after the unheeding Rosamond.

She looked him all over with little friendliness. He was a horrid boy, she thought, though he was her best friend's brother. But then Abigail could not help having a brother like this.

"Oh! I know already without guessing," she said indifferently. "Abbie told me."

"Just like her long tongue," spluttered Walter. "But I say! Isn't it fine? I'm going to Scotland on Wednesday. I'm going to school with my cousins Kenny and Malcolm. But first I'm going to have a month's holidays, and it'll be snow-ball time. Golly! it'll be fine! And you and Abbie won't be in it." He looked at her triumphantly.

He was a small-sized boy with light blue eyes, a freckled face and sandy hair—together an unprepossessing-looking boy. His school-mates called him Scotch Ginger.

Rosamond's dark eyes flickered dangerously.

"We don't want to be in it—not if you're there," said she, turning her back on him, and resuming her walk homewards.

"But I say, Rosie—well, Roz—a—mond, then, you *are* nasty!"

He walked beside her, for he had further triumphs to gloat over, with her for audience.

"I'm going to be a doctor," he continued, "And when I come back I'll cure you for *nix*" (nothing).

"Will you?" queried Rosamond doubtfully. Walter was not noted for generosity.

"Yes, and father says he hopes I'll get a what's—the—name in Cape Town."

"What's that?" asked Rosamond, stopping short.

"Oh, what do you call it when you play the piano—have to, you know? Not music-lesson, but the other thing?"

"Practice," said Rosamond shortly.

"That's it! I'm going to get a practice in Cape Town when I come back."

"Perhaps," admitted Rosamond, doubtfully; and then with much animation, "perhaps you'll never come back."

She knew Abbie would be glad if he didn't, for he made her life a burden to her, and Abbie's interests were very close to her own.

"Oh, yes," returned Walter, putting his hands in his pockets and looking assurance personified,

"of course I'll come back, and if you're nice to me, I'll marry you. I think," looking at her critically, "I think you'd do fine for a doctor's wife. You fixed up my hand bully that day I cut it with the chopper."

"Huh!" said Rosamond, with deep contempt.

This maddened Walter. To be openly scorned, and by Rosie Molyneaux too! Though indeed it was not the first, nor the hundred and first time. His eyes blazed and his face grew red.

"But you will," he stuttered fiercely.

"I won't," said Rosamond looking at him with laughing, contemptuous eyes. "And you can't make me either. I hope you stay in your old Scotland, so there! You are a horrid boy. I'm sure you'll hurt the people when you're a doctor, just like you hurt Abbie's cat the other day pretending to cure it."

She marched on with her head in the air.

A sullen look settled on Walter's face and he stood glowering after her. Then a bright idea struck him.

"You don't know what I was going to give you," he shouted after her insinuatingly.

"Don't care," shouted back Rosamond, not deigning to look back. She was very close to

No. 8 by this time, and Walter had a wholesome fear of Rosamond's mother, which kept him out of her range.

"I say, Rosie—Roz-a-mond—I'll give you my new knife," he shouted, running after her.

Rosamond stopped. "Where is it?" she demanded. Abbie wanted a knife, she knew, and they could share this one between them.

"But I say, just let me tell you first about my singing." He had a voice like a bird and he knew it. He could not help knowing it. His doting parents spoke of his musical ability continually; his teacher's remarks of praise were repeated until the boy knew them by heart, though he had a short memory; small wonder he knew he was musically gifted.

"Go on," said Rosamond. "It's the only nice thing about you," She was of the opinion that his gift was a mistake. Such a horrid boy should not be able to sing like an angel.

Walter grinned appreciatively. It was a great word of praise—from Rosamond.

"I'm going to get singing lessons and a fiddle," he said, with a swift return of his boastful manner.

"Huh! A fiddle! You'll make it squawk like Mrs. Jaffe's geese."

"Will I? You'll see! I'm going to swot, I tell you, when I get to Scotland. You'll see!"

"You swot? You won't! I'm going home now," announced Rosamond.

"Your mother gives you what-ho if you're late, eh?" jeered Walter.

"It's a pity your mother doesn't do the same to you," retorted Rosamond, turning to face No. 8 once more.

"Hi, Rosamond! Wacht-een-beetje (wait a bit)! I'm going to Rondebosch to Aunt McGregor's to-morrow, and Wednesday I'm going on the ship, so I'm going to say good-by to you now." His voice quivered a little, whether designedly or accidentally was hard to tell, but the quiver reached Rosamond's consciousness and she turned again.

"I'm going away thousands of miles," said Walter. "Perhaps I'll be drowned."

"Oh, no you won't," Rosamond assured him cheerfully, "I wouldn't cry about it beforehand, anyhow."

"I'll give you my new knife," said Walter, and his look said, "What will you give me?" A shower of presents had fallen on him continually since his departure had been finally settled.

"I wouldn't," said Rosamond thoughtfully. "Not if you want anything back. I haven't anything except a jubilee medal and some mignonette seed and I don't believe it's any good," she added conscientiously. "But where's the knife?" she asked briskly, after a pause.

"By the house," said Walter in deep dejection. He knew by long experience that Rosamond was riotously generous—when she had anything to give.

"Didn't that new chap—what's his name—give you anything?" he questioned.

"No," said Rosamond; "nothing but books and sweets. The sweets are ate up—and you don't want books."

"No, I don't," said Walter. "But I'll give you the knife, all the same. It's got four blades and a corkscrew. It's bully, I tell you. You won't swap it or give it away, or—or lose it, will you?"

"Oh, bother!" cried Rosamond, "If you're going to make such a fuss, you'd better keep it." She wanted it for Abbie, not for herself. "I'm going," she announced finally.

"Everybody says good-by to me now," said Walter with becoming dejection. He had learned

from the speeches of his elders that he ought to be "sorry to leave his dear parents, and his home, so young." "And they shook hands with me," he added. Rosamond sighed impatiently. It was not the first time she had experienced Walter's dogged power of persistence.

"You're the troublesomest boy! The way you keep on! Here, good-by!" She shook him limply by the hand. "I hope you won't be drowned, but if you are, don't cry about it. The sea's full enough already!"

She was really gone beyond recall, within the wicket-gate of the garden of No. 8.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE CRICKET MATCH.

"OH frabjous day!" exclaimed Rosamond in ecstasy, when No. 8 Dunstable Street was left at a safe distance behind, and she was jumping along the way to the railway-station of Cape Town beside Justin Fortescue. She was prettily dressed, for a wonder, but this was due to Justin, who had seen her in this white frock and had bought her a pretty white bonnet with dainty lace and ribbon, a part of her birthday gift. It framed the little thin face, and was tied under the chin with white ribbon, and the lace softly shadowed the wonderful dark eyes—Irish eyes, said Justin, who studied them. The child looked almost pretty. She was daintily made, with fine and shapely hands and feet, and delicate features, but there was lacking that healthy look of childhood. She was eleven to-day, but she looked younger because of the joy that brightened her face.

For had not Justin—this handsome, well-

dressed, immaculate Justin—besought mother to allow her to go with him to the cricket-match at Newlands, as a birthday treat?

And here she was, actually in the flesh, no “make believe” this time—dancing along beside him, so happy that her heart was singing, and her feet scarcely touched the ground.

“And shall we see the princess?” she asked, presently as they approached the station.

“Why, Bride, what princess?”

Then Bride laughed and got red.

“Oh, of course, you don’t know. I forgot.”

“But may I not know now?” asked Justin, who had at rare times heard her pretty fancies—only rarely, though, for she was shy about voicing them, even to him.

“Some day—perhaps—” she said, laughing happily.

“It must be soon, then, because I leave for Johannesburg this day week.”

“This day week! So soon!” Rosamond’s face clouded.

“Why, Fairy, will you miss me?”

It had not cost him much to be kind to the child. He was but following the generous instincts of his nature, and carrying out the wishes

of his Aunt Helen in befriending Eustace Molyneux's little daughter. He did not realize how much his kindness had brightened the little dull gray life—nor how much his absence would be felt.

Rosamond was shy in disclosing herself. She showed a reticence and composure which, unfortunately, her mother, who should have understood her, mistook for stubbornness and coldness of heart.

So now, though her little heart sank, she looked up at him unsmilingly, but bravely withal.

"You must go. Of course you have to go," she said, as if assuring herself as well as him.

"I have to be back in England in February—and I must do Natal and the Transvaal before returning, but I shall come back to Cape Town before leaving for good. I must see my fairy Bride again, you know."

"Will you? Oh, will you!" The smile returned and the sun shone again. She sighed with relief.

Then there was the excitement of getting their tickets, an operation of intense interest to Rosamond. She could count on one hand the number of times she had gone country-ward in the train.

"Will you see your friends at Newlands?" she asked when they were in the train at last.

"Probably. There are some fellows I know—from England—playing in the match to-day, and some friends I made on board ship will be there too." He always answered her questions as if she had quite grown up. That was one of her many reasons for electing him as prince.

"But Mrs. D'Uminy and Miss D'Uminy?" she asked with a trace of anxiety in her face.

"Yes, I believe they will be there."

The compartment was full of people, and Rosamond subsided, sitting demurely with her legs dangling in their new tan-colored stockings to match her new tan shoes.

She was experiencing for almost the first time the feminine joy of being well-dressed. There was a new and glowing satisfaction to be got out of those dainty, well-fitting shoes, and she remembered her pretty bonnet with much complaisance.

She looked at the people in the compartment, glancing from one to the other with scarcely veiled curiosity.

There was an airily dressed girl in a big white hat with red and yellow roses, and when she moved there was a *tinkle-tinkle* of a multitude

of bracelets with coins attached to them. She moved her hands very often and Rosamond wondered if it was to hear the coins and bracelets tinkle. This girl had suddenly, as she looked at her, a strange resemblance to Mrs. Jaffe's French poodle. Rosamond looked hard to see just where she was like it, or why, but could not decide, though she mentally named her "The French-Poodle Girl."

There in a corner, making himself very comfortable, and taking up the space of two passengers, was a fat man, who sank into three double chins with wonderful ease. He groaned audibly when any one came in or went out on his side, because he had to draw in his feet, and change his position, or else he felt sore about the shins. The day was very hot, and the carriage crowded, but still the fat man continued to take up the space of two.

"I'm glad father isn't fat," said Rosamond to herself, "for everybody would glare at him for not scrooging himself up, when he just couldn't do it."

Opposite the French-Poodle Girl was a young man in a very high collar and very long cuffs, and when he was not hitching up his nether garments

at his knees he was shooting his cuffs or trying to swallow the knob of his cane.

He repeated these three actions. Rosamond noticed, with a certain rhythm. She decided, on comparing them, that he was brother to the French-Poodle Girl.

Beside him sat a man with a sad face, who looked out of the window nearly all the time.

Once he turned and met Rosamond's earnest eyes, and he smiled. It was just, Rosamond thought, like the mountain on a cloudy day, when the sun comes out suddenly, lighting up the kloofs, and making its green slopes shimmer. Table Mountain was always The Mountain to her, and she knew its every phase by heart.

But now she smiled back, quite frankly into the stranger's face, and dreamed a story about him at once. She was always making the people she met the actors in some mental drama of her own.

She was so busy thinking about the Man with the Sad Face that she got a surprise when a porter called out "New—lands, New—lands!"

"Come along, Bride! We get out here," said Justin. She trotted along beside him, after giv-

ing a parting smile to the Knight of the Woeful Countenance.

Everybody was going in the same direction, and Rosamond had never seen such crowds of people in her somewhat limited experience.

She never knew quite how it was, but she found herself perched up on the grand stand beside Justin, and surrounded by many gaily dressed women and more men than she could count.

The long smooth field with the cricket-patch in its center, and white-clad men dotted all over it, the blue-gums, pines and oaks that surrounded it, the blue mountain and the bluer sky, the golden sunshine and the moving mass of the multi-colored crowd—all made a picture that gave the child intense delight.

There was a pleasant hum of conversation, with now and then trills of laughter from the people about her. Curious glances were cast at the tall young man and his little companion.

"Mr. Fortescue!" called a voice from somewhere near them, and looking down Justin saw Mrs. D'Uminy and her daughter.

"Come along, Bride!" he said, "we are fairly caught this time, hang it!"

He helped her down to where Mrs. D'Uminy was awaiting him.

"Now, I shall see the princess, perhaps," said Rosamond to herself, when they were in the presence of a portly elderly lady and a girl in summer attire. Rosamond turned her attention at once to the girl, experiencing as she did so a distinct sense of disappointment.

Antoinette D'Uminy was decidedly unattractive in appearance. She was a younger and slighter edition of her mother, with small blue eyes, a colorless face with indefinite features, and a manner that was artificial.

"Oh, this is not the princess! it isn't, it isn't!" said Rosamond to herself, fiercely. "She isn't pretty and she isn't kind."

For the girl looked at her with an unsympathetic stare, and offered her two fingers gingerly when Justin introduced her as "his little friend."

"How very kind of you to bring a child of that age to a cricket-match, Mr. Fortescue," she said, and she laughed in such a way that Justin found himself reddening.

"She is more intelligent as a companion than some older folk I have met," he asserted, suavely.

"Of her sex, too, doubtless?"

"Shall we say—but not in the Cape?"

"And do you like cricket, my dear?" questioned Mrs. D'Uminy ponderously, addressing Rosamond.

"Yes." Just the bare monosyllable, for Rosamond could be taciturn when she wished. She resented with all her small soul the tone of patronage in which they spoke to her—and she resented too, the insinuation she was quick enough to read, that Justin had done an unusual and somewhat foolish thing in bringing her.

"A strange little girl!" said Mrs. D'Uminy. "Daughter you say, of Mr. Molyneaux? Ah, yes, I believe he is well connected at home, but made an unfortunate marriage. Well, may we hope for your escort to a shadier part of the field, Mr. Fortescue?"

"Delighted!" murmured Justin, politely. His manner was perfection—but inwardly he was raging. He had seen the flash of Rosamond's eyes and the upright tension of the small figure, and knew the words had hurt her.

"Come along, Bride!" he said, and she turned and smiled, his voice was so kind.

So she walked beside him, though Miss D'Uminy tried to scathe her with those small eyes of hers.

In her delight at looking at the crowds as they passed, Rosamond forgot the pain of a few moments before. Now and then she heard the affected giggle of the girl on the other side of Justin, and Mrs. D'Uminy's gaspy sentences, but wisely forbore to listen, fearing they might again spoil her day by uncalled-for remarks.

On their tour round the field they encountered some friends of the D'Uminys, to whom Justin was introduced; there were three ladies and four men, and presently Rosamond found herself on the outskirts of the group, unheeded. She surveyed them all with her grave, attentive glance. There was much laughter, and every one seemed to be talking together, and nobody finished a sentence, or listened to any one else, it seemed to this youthful spectator.

After a short time they parted, with more laughter and shrill calls from the ladies to each other, and bows from the men. Then Mrs. D'Uminy sailed on, followed by the rest of her party.

There was a shady seat under the oaks, in a good position, and they sat down. People passed to and fro, and Rosamond watched them curiously.

Meanwhile several men had gathered round the

seat, and the two ladies held a small court. Justin was talking earnestly to a man on the outskirts of the group, and watching the play on the field. Rosamond heard clapping now and then, and heard "Boundary, boundary!" and more clapping. A band, stationed near the grand stand which they had left, played at intervals, and Rosamond wished it would never stop.

After some time Justin went to Mrs. D'Uminy.

"May I leave my little friend with you for a short time?" he asked. "She will be very quiet I know, and I will come for her soon. I saw Bronson just leaving the wickets and I want to meet him. Am I asking too great a favor?"

"Not at all, not at all, Mr. Fortescue. I thought you would find the little girl an encumbrance. Leave her here by all means, Mr. Fortescue."

"She is by no means an encumbrance, I assure you, but I couldn't think of bringing her to the pavilion with me. Thanks for letting her stay. I will not make my adieux to you, for I shall return soon again."

Mrs. D'Uminy waved him off with ponderous gaiety.

"Au revoir," she said, and Justin went.

But first he stooped over Rosamond.

"I won't be long away, little Bride," he said. "You won't mind my leaving you here for a short time? Only men, not ladies, go where I am going, you understand?"

"Quite. Stay away as long as you like. I'll be all right here," she said bravely, though she felt her courage fly at the idea of being left alone with this fat lady and her daughter with the narrow eyes.

And Justin went off quite satisfied, little dreaming that the tears were very near her eyes, and she was saying to herself in a sort of monotonous chant, "I am in his way, I am in his way."

She sat quite still, feeling very dreary despite all the sunshine and the music of the band and the gay laughter about her, and the panorama of fashion set out before her unaccustomed eyes.

"I wish, I wish I was at home! I shouldn't have come. I am in his way!" cried the sensitive heart within her.

Mrs. D'Uminy forgot her altogether, half-hidden as she was behind the men who had gathered around the seat. And when the ladies rose at last, they trooped off and left Rosamond alone on the bench.

She sat there watching with anxious eyes down the way she saw Justin disappear. The band stopped playing and it was plainly time to go home. All who passed her wended their way toward the gate by which they had entered, and soon she was a solitary small figure at that end of the field.

No Justin came, and Rosamond, with a chill sense of fear upon her, got up and followed a straggling party down the field. They were a man and woman and two children, and the man carried one of the children in his arms, while the other trailed behind, crying fretfully.

That they were all four tired and out of temper was visible to the naked eye.

The crying child turned and saw Rosamond and stopped crying in surprise.

"Poor little boy!" she said, "Are you very tired?" The child did not answer; but looked at her out of two tearful eyes, his face and hands were tearfully grimy. Rosamond put out her hand. "Come," she said gently, "take my hand! It will help you along." The boy suffered her to take him by the hand and they walked on a short distance hand in hand. But the mother turned around and saw them. "Henery! Henery, come

here this minute! Bad boy to take up with strange children!" She made a dash at "Henery" and caught him from Rosamond, giving her an indignant look. The "bad boy" proved his right to the name and bawled loudly.

Rosamond walked on past them quickly.

"Oh, it's been a crooked day altogether," she said to herself. "I wish I had never come."

She passed through the gate, and the sight of the railway made her think with dismay that Justin had her ticket and she had no money to get another. What would they do to her if she traveled without a ticket? Put her in *trunk* (prison) she decided. No, she would sit in the station until Justin came. He must go on by rail, and, of course, he would be searching for her.

The crowds on the narrow platform at the station frightened her, but she choked back the tears, and found a seat on a bench outside the waiting-room.

CHAPTER V.

THE KNIGHT OF THE WOEFUL COUNTENANCE.

IN spite of her anxiety Rosamond found much amusement in watching the well-dressed crowd struggling for seats in a train already half-filled as it came from Wynberg. A party of school-boys who had taken possession of a carriage made sport of the rushing passengers.

"Room here!" cried two or three of them, hanging half out of the windows and doors.

When some dozen excited people made a rush for the door the boys said:

"We're only twenty in here. Come in, if you like." One glance at the mass of mischievous faces inside was enough to cause the would-be travelers to turn away, angry or amused according to their various characters. The boys laughed undisguisedly, and, sad to relate, Rosamond laughed too.

After considerable delay the train steamed off toward the city, and the porters announced from the Newlands platform to the multitude of

inquirers that there would be another train in ten minutes—a "special."

Rosamond searched eagerly among the crowd on the platform for Justin, but could not find him, and so returned to her seat strongly inclined to cry. What was to become of her? There was not one friendly face in all that concourse of people. Men, women, and children passed and repassed her, and some cast curious glances at her, but most of them did not see her. The second train steamed in, and again there ensued the undignified scramble for seats. The cricket match had been one of the most important, as it was one of the opening matches of a series between a specially chosen team from the mother country and eleven similar colonials. Hence the crowds.

In that jostling, pushing mass of humanity Rosamond caught sight of the "Knight of the Woeful Countenance," as she had mentally dubbed the man who had smiled at her in the train coming to Newlands that afternoon.

Acting on a sudden impulse she beckoned to him across the crowd. Her little pale face was paler than usual, her eyes, appealing in their unmitigated misery, drooped, and her whole appearance bespoke her distress.

He made his way to her as soon as the crowd allowed him.

"Are you alone, child? Where's your brother?" said the Knight.

"It wasn't my brother. It was Mr. Fortescue, and—and I think he has forgotten me. And please, will you take me home, or I must stay here all night." Her voice quivered, but she choked back the tears bravely.

"Certainly, I will take you home. That young fellow deserves a horsewhipping for leaving you alone in a crowd like this. Where is he?"

"I don't know. And it was not his fault, either," protested Rosamond, loyally. "He left me with some people—ladies—and they left me alone. I haven't any ticket or I could have gone home by myself. If you would please get me one, my father would—"

"That's all right, little one. Where do you live?"

"No. 8 Dunstable Street, Cape Town."

"Right," said the Knight, "don't leave this spot until I get your ticket. Then I'll take you home."

"Oh," said Rosamond, with a profound sigh of relief, "I just *knew* he was a nice man."

Wherein, with the instinct of childhood, she was right.

He came back with her ticket—"a single to Cape Town"—he told her, and gave it into her own hands, an act which also pleased Rosamond. That small piece of cardboard meant "Home" for her just then. The train into which they got was comfortably filled, for the greater part of the crowd had gone in the two previous trains.

Her companion coughed from time to time, and Rosamond noticed he spoke in a strange, weak voice, and his breathing was labored.

When they had the carriage to themselves at Salt River, Rosamond said, with her quaint politeness, "You have a cold. I am so sorry."

The man smiled whimsically.

"It's a permanent one—I mean it's come to stay."

He was in consumption, and the English doctors had sent him to the Cape as a last resource, knowing his days were numbered.

"Can't you get anything for it?" questioned Rosamond. "Mother gives me some stuff when I get a cold. I don't know what she calls it, and its very horrid, but," with a judicial air, "it does take away the wheezes."

"I'm afraid, little one, it wouldn't take away my wheezes." He smiled again. "This kind of cold is going to be the death of me."

"No, oh, no!" protested Rosamond, in a horrified tone. "You are much too kind to die."

"Kind! am I kind? Why, little one, any man would have done more for you than I have done."

"They would not," said Rosamond firmly. "I would have had to stay on that platform at Newlands all night if you had not come." She shuddered at the bare idea.

"Well, here we are at Cape Town, and now for No. 8 Dunstable Street. Won't your mother be very anxious about you?"

"Father will," said Rosamond promptly. What "mother" would do, Rosamond would not let herself think just then, though she had a very fair certainty. No explanation whatever would prevent the punishment awaiting her. But she would not think of that just yet.

She stepped briskly along the streets in the summer dusk beside the Knight. He coughed a good deal and Rosamond's thoughts came back to what he had said.

"I'm sure I could find my way home now," she said quickly. "I think your cold is too bad

and you ought not to be out in the damp." This was a fragment of some of her mother's remarks to herself. The man laughed weakly.

"The doctors gave me three months to live—one of them has gone already. A little damp more or less doesn't count for much now."

Rosamond looked at him with intense interest.

"You are not going to *die*?" she said in an awed whisper.

"So I believe." He looked down into her small face smilingly.

"And are you not afraid?" she asked.

"Sometimes." He laughed as the admission escaped him. "But it is just as well to know it's coming, is it not? You see, I have no little girl to be sad about me as your father has. And now I come to think of it, I believe we do not know each other's names. Now mine is Murray Campbell."

"And mine is Rosamond Bridget Molyneaux," she said. "My father calls me mavourneen most times, and mother calls me Rosamond and Mr. Fortescue calls me Bride, short for Bridget, you know."

"Molyneaux! Is your father Eustace Moly-

neaux?" The Knight looked at her with keener interest.

"Yes—that's his name."

"By Jove! Why, Eustace Molyneaux was a great friend of mine in our college days. We were at Cambridge together and met in London afterward. Oh, those old days, when we were boys together!"

The Knight was speaking to himself rather than to the child, but presently he looked at her again.

"And so you are Rosamond—Rose of the world! Well, little Rosebud—there's a new name for you—I never expected to meet your father again. He is here in town?"

"Oh yes, father has an office down town, but we live in the Gardens."

"The Gardens?" he said questioninglly.

"Yes; don't you know that all this part of the town where all the trees are, is called so?"

"No, I didn't know, little one. But I've only been a week in Cape Town altogether. Your mother is also in town?"

"Oh yes." A gloom fell over Rosamond's face as she recalled what was probably awaiting her at home. And she fell to wondering if they

had missed her yet, or if Mr. Fortescue had arrived before her.

"There's the Angelus," she said, hastening her steps. "That is six o'clock."

"The Angelus! Shall we say it? You are a Catholic of course, child?"

"Of course," said Rosamond, and to her surprise he took off his hat and, still walking, began to say the Angelus! Rosamond answered the responses, profoundly impressed the while at the reverent attitude and fervent voice of the Knight.

When the last response was given, and Rosamond had blessed herself, she caught sight of a familiar figure at the gate of No. 8. "There's mother," she said, and the man noticed the tremor of fear in the voice. "She's watching for me."

"Are you frightened, child?" asked the Knight kindly.

She lifted her big dark eyes to his face for a moment, but did not answer.

"You have no cause to be blamed or scolded," he went on gently. "It is that Mr. Fortescue who ought to get both blame and scolding."

"No, oh, no," said Rosamond quickly. Then a sharp voice came shrilly down the street.

"Rosamond, Rosamond, is that you? Where *have* you been? Where did you go to? And your father and I in such a state about you!"

"It's all right, mother. This gentleman brought me home. He knows father. They were at school together. I *did* wait for Mr. Fortescue, but he never came. I had no ticket to come home with and this gentleman gave me one."

The child poured out the words in a breathless, frightened way, looking up into her mother's face pleadingly, as she spoke.

"Pardon me, but may I introduce myself? I am Murray Campbell. I am glad to have been able to render your little girl a slight service."

The Knight bowed in a manner that impressed Mrs. Molyneaux, and caused her to dissemble her wrath against Rosamond.

"I'm sure it's very kind of you, Mr. Campbell; we've been in such a state about her. My husband and Mr. Fortescue have just gone out to look for her at the police station. But I'll send the house-boy after them and they'll come back. Won't you come in? It's so kind of you to have brought my naughty child home."

"She is not to blame at all, I assure you, Mrs. Molyneaux. She was left with some ladies, and

they did not take her with them when they went from the cricket ground. Not she, but they, should have the blame, if there is any."

Rosamond, quaking as she listened, felt as if she would like to tell the Knight what a brave and true knight he was proving himself to be. Her mother led the way into the house. There was no light in the drawing-room, but Mrs. Molyneaux called her domestic and presently she ushered the visitor into the room.

Murray Campbell looked somewhat keenly at his old friend's wife, and experienced, as he did so, a shock of unpleasant surprise. Was this the woman that fastidious Eustace Molyneaux had chosen as his wife? In the old days they had both been suitors for the hand of beautiful Helen Fortescue. He, Murray Campbell, had never married; no woman could ever take Helen's place.

But evidently Molyneaux had consoled himself. His wife was talking volubly while these thoughts were passing through the visitor's mind. Her voice was peculiarly shrill; it had a "nagging" sound even in the pleasant utterances; her air and bearing were coarse and common. But if Murray Campbell noticed these things, his

own manner was the perfection of courtesy, his voice and bearing suave and polished.

Meanwhile Rosamond stole away to her room upstairs, glad to escape the punishment she dreaded—even temporarily—for she had no surety that it might not be hers yet.

Lying fully dressed on her little bed in the dark, she heard her father and Justin enter the drawing-room, and heard, too, much laughter and talking, and her mother's voice over all. Presently she heard some one coming up the stairs three steps at a time. It was Justin. He came to her door and she jumped up to meet him.

"You aren't angry, are you, Mr. Fortescue? I *did* wait on the seat, but every one—"

But Justin had caught the small figure up in his arms, and was kissing her—this time unrebuked.

"Why, Bride, my fairy Bride, I thought I had lost you. Angry with you! You sweetest of small girls, it is I who should ask you to forgive me. You will never come out with me again, I am sorely afraid."

"I will, oh, I will!" Rosamond assured him fervently.

"You are just a real fairy Bride," he said, and set her down on the floor. She shook out her

skirts and looked up to him, half-laughing and half-crying. "You see, I thought you were quite safe with Mrs. D'Uminy—would it be wrong to say, hang her!—I met a lot of fellows I knew, and though I didn't forget you. I was sure I should find you all right with Mrs. D'Uminy. When I met her just as she was leaving, she protested she knew absolutely nothing of your whereabouts. Oh, I was in a wax!" he laughed, as if to relieve his feelings, and Rosamond laughed too for company. Was there any one who had such sunshiny ways as this tall young man?

"Thank God, you fell into the hands of that man downstairs—Campbell—a friend of your father's, it seems."

"Yes," said Rosamond, "he was in the train with us going out. And—here's father."

For surely, mounting the stairs rapidly was Mr. Molyneaux.

"Safe and sound, thank God, mavourneen! What a fright you gave your old father! You see now you must not go out of the town again without me."

He swung her up into his arms and kissed her, and Rosamond saw that his eyes were moist. She felt a thrill through her small body, know-

ing she was so dear to him. She clung to him passionately.

"I was safe all the time, father dear," she said with the quaint protective air she always adopted towards him. "You might have known I would come home safely."

"That is what I did not know, mavourneen, and I went through agonies not knowing what to think." He put her down, but still held her by the hand.

"You will never trust her out with me again, I'm afraid," said Justin. "I can't tell you how much ashamed of myself I feel."

But Mr. Molyneaux laughed easily.

"Don't blame yourself so severely, my lad. It was scarcely fair for us to let the child go out with you to such an affair at all. And there's no harm done, thank God."

He looked lovingly at the small upturned face and held the child's hand closely. All the affection of his nature was centered in that frail piece of femininity—and he had endured the keenest anguish from the moment Justin had reported her as missing, until the diminutive house-boy had caught them up on their way to the police station to make inquiries for her.

"You are to come down stairs, mavourneen. Your mother will let you stay up a little longer—if you are not too sleepy."

"No, oh, no! And is the Knight there? I mean Mr. Murray Campbell?"

"Yes, the Knight is there. A good name for him, by Jove! He rescued a damsel in distress, like the knights in your fairy tales—eh, mavourneen?"

And laughing light-heartedly, Eustace Molyneux went down the stairs hand in hand with his small daughter, followed by Justin.

CHAPTER VI.

"THE PRINCESS."

"THERE's been a letter from Watty," announced Abigail Matheson. "Such a letter! My! It took father and mother and Essie all their time to make it out. And they would never have done it, if Uncle Alexander Ross had not written as well, explaining what Watt said."

"Then he wasn't drowned after all," said Rosamond. "He was awfully frightened he would be. What's he say in the letter?"

The two children were seated at their school desk, and it was what they called "sum-time"—that is, they were supposed to be working diligently at arithmetic, while the teacher instructed four or five of the backward members of the class in the mysteries of "weights and measures."

Abby kept a watchful eye on the teacher, and went on in a carefully lowered tone.

"He's had a jolly time with my cousins—snowballing and skating, and he fell fifteen times the first time he tried to skate, and he's bruised

all over. He got a cold and couldn't sing at Kenneth's birthday party, so he cried."

"Just like him," said Rosamond. "He wanted to show off and got mad because he couldn't."

"Yes, that's just what it was," asserted Abbie eagerly, "and *that* part was in uncle's letter. Watty wouldn't tell us he cried. Mother says he cried because he couldn't give the others pleasure. But then mother always makes excuses for Watty. She doesn't for me. It's horrid being a girl in our family."

Abbie sighed and put down the result of eight times nine as sixty-three in her abstraction.

"And what more?" questioned Rosamond; "in the letter, I mean?"

"Oh! He says Cousin Flora Ross is bully and *behaves*. She can play the piano lovely—the 'Blue Bells of Scotland' and 'The Campbells are Coming'—and lots of things. And they're going to learn—what do you call it, when two people play on the piano?"

"A duet," said Rosamond.

"Yes, duets," said Abbie, looking to see if Rosamond was impressed, but that young person was reducing miles to furlongs unmovedly. Presently, she paused and looked at Abbie.

"I think Cousin Flora Ross is just like a big wax doll," she said, dreamily picturing to herself as usual. "I think she gets very tired of smiling and smiling all the time, but you see she can't cry—or anything. It's the way she's made."

These two small girls always were being told to behave nicely at home and at school; it was the one word they heard constantly. But "to behave" was so far beyond them that it was in the region of the mythical, and for any girl of eleven or thereabouts to achieve it seemed incredible.

"Grown-ups want so much from a person," said Rosamond one day, when she and Abbie were discussing the matter. "Why can't we be born grown up, and then we would behave right from the beginning?"

But Abbie's wit could not supply an answer.

She laughed now—but guardedly—at the droll idea of Cousin Flora Ross as a big wax doll, with hair one couldn't comb, and beads for eyes.

"And what more?" demanded Rosamond.

But at that moment the teacher caught sight of the two small heads together, and on being called to order they hastily applied themselves to the task of reducing miles to inches.

At the tiffin hour Rosamond and Abbie as usual set off for their respective homes together. Abbie was the older by a year, but Rosamond was the leader in all their childish doings, Abbie following, with occasional rebellions.

Abbie, the merry-faced, glib-tongued and freckled, was the opposite of Rosamond in every way. Practical, where Rosamond was a dreamer, learned in a thousand ways where Rosamond was profoundly ignorant, boisterous and somewhat "boyish" where Rosamond was sedate and essentially feminine—but really alive, nevertheless, to the fact that Rosamond was cleverer than herself.

Abbie, whose freckled, mischievous face, dancing hazel eyes and auburn hair—with a touch of red in it that gave rise to her nickname of "Rooi Kopf" (Red Head)—with a look of robust health and a fund of animal spirits—was even in exterior appearance a strong contrast to Rosamond.

The two were inseparable friends, and had been since the day when Abbie took Rosamond in charge in the school recreation-ground. It was Rosamond's first day at school, and she was feeling frightened and lonely among the crowd of new faces, for she had had an isolated life until then,

being an only child, and separated from play-mates of her own age by the rigid rule of her mother's government. Partly it was her mother's own yearning for the child's undivided love that made her constitute herself the child's whole world in those early years. But Mrs. Molyneaux was forced to acknowledge that it had not proved a successful plan. Rosamond was highly imaginative, and when she prattled her quaint fancies to her mother they were met with a want of sympathy which the child was quick to resent. She became reserved and unnaturally quiet, while living in a world of her own, into which her father had often entrance because he understood, but which debarred admittance to the mother because she showed no desire to enter.

So Abbie was Rosamond's first child-friend, and indeed the only one, for she was reserved to an unusual degree, though by no means unloving or ungracious. The two were inseparable at school, and at home as far as the discipline of their elders permitted.

They quarrelled with surprising frequency, but became friends again with equally surprising rapidity. It was dangerous to act as peace-maker between them when they happened to disagree.

Did any unlucky girl think it a laudable thing to do, seeing that their friendship was one of the recognized institutions of the school, she met with a stormy reception from Abbie, and a silent and inexplicably distressing contempt from Rosamond, and retired annoyed with both, but fully convinced of the folly of her well-meant endeavor.

As the two children wended their way homewards on this particular day, Rosamond confided gloomily to Abbie that Mr. Fortescue was going away in two days' time.

Abbie, as Rosamond's friend, had highly approved of Justin Fortescue, and had been the recipient of his favors. Her face fell when she heard of his departure. Childlike, they had not reckoned on the loss of their friend, and now that it was about to come, they looked blankly forward to days without his presence.

"He is going back to college when he gets to England again," said Rosamond; "but first he is going up-country and he says I must write to him, so I promised I would."

"I'll write, too," said Abbie, in the abundant sorrow of her heart, though she hated the sight of a pen as much as Rosamond liked it.

"Will you?" questioned Rosamond doubtfully; "you don't like writing, you know."

"I'll write, too," said Abbie, with a gloomy determination. "Mr. Fortescue is just the nicest grown-up I ever met. And he isn't altogether grown-up—only half. I hope he won't go and get horrid when he is a grown-up."

"No, oh, no, he won't!" Rosamond said hastily. At that moment a familiar voice called their names, and, turning quickly, they saw Justin a few paces behind them.

It was a pleasant sight to the young man to see the swift brightening of both the childish faces when they recognized him.

"I wonder what you two little ladies were talking of so earnestly? I called you several times before you heard me."

He looked from one to the other, but his glance lingered on Rosamond's upturned face. "Of you," she said; "I was telling Abbie you were going away."

"Yes, and it will be just horrid when you've gone," said Abbie, the candid. "And I said to Rosamond you were quite the nicest grown-up I ever met."

Justin laughed his pleasant boyish laugh, and

tilted his straw hat further over his eyes. "For how long will you remember me, my flattering Abigail? But wait—that's not a fair question. I have a suggestion to make to you both. What do you say to a drive to Muizenberg after lunch—I mean tiffin?"

"Jolly! oh, jolly!" cried Abbie. "You'll ask mother to let me go? It's geography day to-day, and I just loathe geography. Oh, do come now, and ask mother if I may go."

"And what says my Rose of the World?"

Rosamond's eyes were shining with delight at the idea.

"To Muizenberg? To the sea! It would be lovely," she said eagerly, "but—will mother let me go?"

"Mother will, of course, and your father is coming with us."

"Father, too!"

That was the final touch to her delight. An hour later the quartette, in a landau with two gray horses and a Malay driver, left the city behind them and were soon out into the country.

Though the children lived within sight of the sea, they rarely made a close acquaintance with it. Abbie could remember the three times she

had been at Sea Point Beach, with the attendant joys of paddling and building with sand.

Rosamond knew Wynberg better than the nearer suburbs of her native city. Her father had often taken her to Wynberg, and even to Constantia, where once they had picnicked on a wine-farm during the grape season. But Rosamond had a passion for the sea. Often she and Abbie had clambered out on the flat roof of Matheson's house to look at the wide stretch of the bay lying like a bluer heaven than the one over their heads, but as far, practically, beyond them.

This was, needless to say, a stolen, if delicious pleasure, for there was considerable risk in getting on the flat roof, and still more risk when on it. But the exquisite thrill of delight at the glory of the sea spread out before them was worth both risks. And if they turned away from the sea, there was the wonderful mountain, whose face, under every aspect, was familiar as a friend's to Rosamond.

She had peopled its kloofs and caves with fairy legions of her own creation. She ran to her bedroom window every morning to give it greeting. It had been the friend of her childhood always. To Abbie, her dreams and fancies were revealed—

yet not fully, even to her. For Abbie showed a strong inclination to ask matter-of-fact questions that were calculated to disturb the reigning harmony between the two friends.

But to-day even practical Abbie was ready to accept all Rosamond's "make-believe," however unusual it might prove. There was magic in the golden sunlit air that lifted her auburn curls and struck pleasantly against her sunny face.

The oaks in full summer leafage with their fresh and radiant green, yet unspoiled by the red dust raised by the swift "southeaster," the long, curving, red-colored road winding through villages that seemed asleep in the hot afternoon sunshine, the ever fresh delight of the mountain in its unfamiliar country aspect—but above all, the keen joy of expectancy in seaside revels they were planning—these things were indeed enough to make the day a red letter one for the two children.

The drive was a ten-mile one, but the children wished it longer. The two men, entering into the spirit of the holiday, gave them undivided attention. In Rosamond's opinion there was no one to equal "father" as a holiday comrade.

And indeed, in spite of his many shortcomings,

Eustace Molyneaux retained enough of that youthfulness of spirit that enables men and women to enter sympathetically into children's simple joys. Justin, too, notwithstanding his own somewhat luxurious childhood, and his years of adolescence, was not found wanting in sympathy and genuine appreciation.

When at length they had left the wide lonely veldt between Diep River and Muizenberg behind, and the sea was near enough for its long white breakers to be seen and heard washing lazily upon the smooth beach, the children's delight was unbounded.

Oh! it was a day treasured up, as no one knew but the child herself, by Rosamond. Afterwards, when the years full of trouble and doubt and anxiety had crowded between that day and her present, she looked back upon its golden sunlit hours as upon a paradise, into which she had entered with the three who were all her world.

And above all her memories of the day was the remembrance of what Justin had said to her, in his grave, kind way, as, tired for the moment of play, she had seated herself beside him. He had been reading before she came, but he put down his book, and looked at her. The child's pale face

was prettily flushed, her dark eyes shone, her whole slight frame seemed for the nonce to partake of the glory and sweetness of the hour.

"The child will be a woman some day—and all too soon," said Justin to himself, looking at her; "and with such a father—and mother, too, alas—will need a friend."

"Little one," he said aloud, smiling the while at her, "have you had a happy time?"

"Yes," said Rosamond, curling herself up at his feet, and sighing contentedly, "it has been a real frabjous day.

"That's your strongest superlative, is it not?" laughed Justin. "Now, you look puzzled. Well, never mind. It would be a real frabjous day for me, too, if I would neither look back nor forward, as you do, little Bride."

"Oh, but I do look forward. Right at the back of my mind, just when Abbie and I were enjoying ourselves best, and all the time there was a thought wanting me to think it." She looked at him with eyes grown suddenly gloomy.

"And you wouldn't think it because it was too sad?" questioned Justin.

"Oh, but I had to think it, because it kept coming up and coming up, like that big rock out

there, when the wave goes over it. You might think that rock was quite lost now—just look, it's only white foam out there, but presently it sticks its black head up again, and that's the way with the thought I did not want to think."

"What a quaint fairy Bride it is!" murmured Justin to himself. "And how Aunt Helen would love her!"

Aloud, he said, "And may I know what this black thought was?"

She looked at him gravely, and then her eyes clouded over and her lips trembled.

"You are going away," she said, "and now I won't even be little maid to the princess."

"Why, Bride, what princess? It is a 'pretending,' again." For he had often of late been allowed to take part in some of the child's games of "make believe" which always began by Rosamond saying "let's pretend."

"No, it's not," said Rosamond, and then by degrees she made known what she meant. Justin listened, with his hat tilted far over his eyes, so that Rosamond did not see the keen amusement in them. But at length he said: "There won't be a princess for years and years, little Bride—perhaps never—who knows? But even if there

were, you would have to be lady-in-waiting instead of a maid—or rather you would be maid of honor!"

"But won't there be a princess—ever?" queried the child, looking at him searchingly. "The prince always finds a princess, you know. Sometimes he has a lot of trouble—most times, I think," she added reflectively. "But the king—his father, you know—always gives in in the end, and they live happy ever after."

"They do in fairy tales," muttered Justin, under his breath. Aloud he said, "Well, fairy Bride, I'll promise you one thing. You'll hear of the finding of the princess—if she is ever found. If I am at the ends of the earth—wherever that may be—I'll write and tell you. There—can I do more?"

Rosamond gave a sigh of relief.

"You *are* nice—always," she said contentedly.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KNIGHT'S LAST BATTLE.

SOME weeks had passed since Justin Fortescue had left Cape Town to travel north. Rosamond had choked back the sobs that rose in spite of all her efforts when the final moment came. It had passed, and with it went Justin, out of her sight, but not out of her life.

One afternoon she and Abbie were seated in an unused coach-house adjoining the Matheson domicile. They had made a table by placing a plank across the top of a barrel and standing at this Rosamond was writing a letter to Justin. After much discussion between them, Rosamond began the letter thus:

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND:

Abbie says that's not the way to begin, but I know I am right, for you are my friend and you are old, twice as old as me. Abbie is sitting beside me and she will write part of this letter, if I leave her any news to write she will. I'll leave her the part about (here there was a

blot) Abbie wont let me write her word. Mr. Murry Cambell is very ill we go to him nearly every day mother lets me go cause he asked her he said I did him good. Abbie makes him laugh but he was cross with us yesterday cause we laughed at the Rosary. We say the Rosary everyday with him he's a grate one for prayers and he speaks lovely like a book about the Saints and angels. My Dear old Friend I miss you very much don't forget about the princess. I play pretending with my dolls that you are here yet and the Princess and all and Ime a made of honor. Father says Mr. Murry Cambell made a will and he is going to give me all his money when he dies cause he has not got any little girl like me, he says I am the rose of the world, and I must be rose of heaven to. I hope Mr. Murry Cambell will not die for years and years and years.

Father says I can't get my money till I am 18 years old that is 7 years yet cept 2 months. Mr. Murry Cambell is the nicest friend next to Father and You. Abbie wants to write some now. Dear Mr. F. i cant spell your name so please excusse. i am very bad at speling but you can laugh if you like Rosamond she spelled her name for me thats how I know it. She cried sumthin awful when

you went away. Her eyes were all swelled up and the gurls teased her at school but I gave them what ho and they let her alone then. We got a new teacher at the school and shes awful strick. She gives me lines when my speling is bad and its always bad. I told her the first day that the speling part of me was not put in but she just looked at me threw her glasses and told me I ought to be shamed and I was not for how can a person spell when that part of them is left out. I wish you were here to help us like you used to. how do you like natal it was found out by a man with a funny name and it was found out on Christmas Day so it was called by that name. With much love and rite soon to your loveing little Abbie.

Now I am writing again my Dear old Friend, now you know that is me your little Bride. Last night the moon was shining and when I went to my window I saw the fairies on the mountain on the table part. It was all like silver on the ground and silver trees were there like tall soldiers. Then the Fairy Queen came out and all the fairies danced and the heath bells made lovely Fairy Music and the Queen danced too and her dress was white and her shoes were satin and her crown was dimonds. But my mother came and closed

my shutters and I went to bed then I love you best after father goodbye from your loving little friend Rosamond Molyneaux.

This was the first of a series of letters which were to prove important factors in Rosamond's life. Justin Fortescue was always from henceforth to be the "old friend" to whom she could express the thoughts and fancies of her childhood and youth, and later, the dreams and aspirations of her womanhood, without fear of being misunderstood.

She saw him again when he returned from Natal on his way to England. There was another farewell full of childish grief on the one side, and a kindly regret on the other. Rosamond felt he was indeed gone from her forever when the steamer bore him from her sight out into Table Bay. She had waved her handkerchief bravely, until the ship was a mere speck on the broad waters, and then had followed her father from the docks with unseeing eyes. Abbie was with her, and the two children clung together in silent grief. In the cab which bore them to No. 8 Dunstable street, they sat, one on each side of Mr. Molyneaux, and while Abbie's quick eyes were noting everything on the way, Rosamond's

tearful gaze saw nothing. There was something unchildlike in the fixed expression of the child's small face, in this the greatest sorrow that had touched her eleven years of life.

Rosamond's mother took a rigid view of grief. She considered it was a luxury which it would be unsafe to indulge in. Perhaps she was right. Rosamond seemed to conform to her mother's lengthy and somewhat harshly-delivered counsels with an admirable meekness of spirit. She went through the extra piano practice imposed on her by her mother with commendable obedience, but there was dire rebellion in her small soul. Her only refuge during this trying time was Murray Campbell. To him the two children went daily, Mrs. Molyneaux willingly consenting, because Rosamond was Murray Campbell's heiress, and she could not well refuse. It was true that he was not rich, but what he had had been willed to Rosamond on his death.

And at times that sad event did not appear to be far off; yet, with strange and varying phases of the disease which held him in its fatal grasp, there were days when he appeared perfectly well. On these days his spirits were almost boyish, and Rosamond and Abbie rejoiced with all their small

souls in the flow of legend and anecdotes with which he beguiled the time. The memory of these days, spent in the sunny-looking room out on the mountain, and with two tall blue-gum trees making a welcome patch of green in the white haze of heat, was one that was treasured all her life by Rosamond.

The order of the evenings of their visits was generally the same. First the two children came in with uncertain expressions on their anxious faces, not knowing whether "Murray" as they now called him, would be well enough to see them. The answer to their eager inquiries being in the affirmative, they rushed upstairs, each wanting to be the first at the door.

Murray himself opened it, his thin face beaming, and holding out a hand for each of them.

"How now, my sunbeams?" he would say, looking down at them lovingly. "Is it a glorious hour, or the half of it?" For sometimes the home authorities limited the time of these visits.

"The whole, Murray, and we've *heaps* to tell you." But generally the *heaps* were soon disposed of to everybody's satisfaction, and then with one on either side of him he told them

stories, which kept even the restless Abbie entranced.

To Rosamond he was better than any fairy book—which was saying a great deal.

Catholic stories and legends brought home the truths of her faith more vividly than the somewhat (to her) trying method of the Catechism. To put it in her own words. "Murray made it a grand thing to be a Catholic, and I'm going to pray for your conversion every day, Abbie."

Abbie somewhat resented the statement that she needed "conversion."

"You needn't trouble," she said, somewhat sharply, throwing her red curls out of her eyes, and sniffing in an injured fashion; "when I'm old enough I'll convert myself."

"But you might die before you get old enough," suggested Rosamond.

"Huh!" said Abbie, with fine scorn. "Murray knows better than you, and *he* says I'm all right."

"Oh, did he?" said Rosamond, doubtfully. "Well, I'll pray all the same."

"No, you won't, then," said Abbie angrily, her face flushing, and her eyes shining. She would not admit that she needed the petitions of Rosamond, feeling in her own tempestuous

way that she was at heart as earnest a believer in all that Murray Campbell said as Rosamond was. It came to mean to her that Rosamond thought she was nearer to their mutual friend than she herself was, and if Abbie had permitted Rosamond to monopolize Justin Fortescue, she was not going to forego her just share of Murray Campbell.

One day Abbie startled Rosamond by saying, "Isn't it funny to think that Christ was a Jew, and His Mother a Jewess? But I don't believe they were like other Jew people." Abbie had scanty regard for Jews and Rosamond had less.

"But what a funny thing to say, Abbie," returned Rosamond, looking at Abbie with eyes wide with horror. "Of course Christ wasn't a Jew. He was a Catholic!"

"He wasn't," said Abbie, "He was a Jew!" They argued fiercely for a long time, Abbie, as usual, losing her temper and Rosamond holding to her own ideas with characteristic firmness. At length Abbie, exasperated by her failure to convince Rosamond, suggested that they should bring the matter to Murray Campbell to be decided. No one had hitherto been allowed to know when these inseparables had one of their frequent "tiffs;" and it showed to what an

eminence Murray had been raised that they did not mind in the least that he should know of them, and make peace very often between the two friends.

"Wasn't Christ a Jew?" cried out Abbie breathlessly, when they reached the invalid's room.

"Of course He was," said Murray, looking from one to the other of the excited faces, and wondering what fresh point of religious doctrine they had made a bone of contention.

"There!" said Abbie, turning round on her small friend, and throwing into voice and gesture and look a whole world of triumph.

Rosamond's face fell. "And was the Blessed Virgin a Jewess?" went on Abbie, eagerly turning again to Murray.

"Yes, but why do you ask?"

"Was Christ really and truly a Jew?" said Rosamond at last.

"Really and truly, my Rose of the World."

Rosamond looked thoughtful for a moment; then her face brightened quickly.

"But of course he became a Catholic afterwards, didn't He?" she said, as if settling the discussion to everybody's satisfaction.

Whereupon Murray found it necessary to explain, and in the course of the explanation led on to the story of the early Christians and brought out an album of views of Rome, so that the two children forgot the cause of contention, and poured out a stream of questions to which Murray gave delightful answers.

They did not realize—any one of the three, and Murray no more than his small visitors, that this was the last occasion on which they would gather at the window looking out to the mountain, and chatter happily for three-quarters of an hour, and finish up with the Rosary, with which they always closed their visit.

Lulled into a false security by a seeming return of strength, Murray was looking forward to settling at Ceres or Beaufort West for the approaching winter, since the doctors had declared the Cape Peninsula too damp for him. But, like a veritable thief in the night, death was waiting for him on the day following the visit just recorded.

He died as he had lived—quietly and gently—passing into the valley of the shadow, aided by the last rites of the Church to which he had ever been a devoted son.

And there were many to mourn for him, even

in that strange land; many a young man beginning life to whom he had given timely help; many a kindly deed or cheery word was remembered when the news spread that he was gone. His two small friends took their loss with all the abandon of grief they felt. Abbie, to whom he had been the ideal of a friend, and one who had gained her entire affection, never ceased to mourn him all her life. She had a certain tenacity of affection unusual in one so young, which strengthened with her years, and was as marked in her dislikes as in her likings. She was in after years what has been called "a good hater."

Rosamond mourned her friend's death in quite a different way. She had always regarded Murray as one for whom that mysterious visitor, death, must come very soon; and his unusual (in her experience) love for prayer, and his fondness for talking of heavenly things, made her always think of him as one who was soon to go to God. So it was with more than childish wisdom she accepted his loss, though she shed many tears over him with Abbie.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROSAMOND.

"MAVOURNEEN'S a woman—a woman," muttered Eustace Molyneaux to himself, as he watched his daughter moving about the room in which he sat. He fell to thinking about the plans he had formed for her; and which he had himself frustrated. She was to have gone to England when twelve years old, to Mrs. Craythorne, who had repeatedly entreated him to send Rosamond to her. She was fifteen now; it was not too late yet to remove the girl from her sordid surroundings and give her the benefit of a short stay among her own people; but the parting became harder to be faced as the years went on, and her father could not contemplate life without her.

Rosamond herself was divided between her desire to see her father's friend, who wrote so kindly to her, and to see Justin, whose letters were the chief joy of her somewhat cheerless girlhood, -and her strong affection for her father, whose

failing health was daily becoming a cause of increasing anxiety.

Years of unceasing dissipation and neglect of the ordinary laws of health were at last telling on a singularly elastic constitution. Mr. Molyneaux was frequently confined to his room for days. And these were days of more than merely physical suffering.

Mrs. Molyneaux seized these opportunities of expressing at considerable length her opinions of his behavior in general, together with the opinions of various friends of hers on the same subject. His "spoiling" of Rosamond was also a subject of complaint on these occasions.

Rosamond had developed into a tall slip of a girl—slender and pale, with regular features, dark eyes, and a mass of dark waving hair. Scarcely pretty yet, but with a promise of beauty, she was in everything a striking contrast to her mother.

Their characters, too, were at total variance; but Mrs. Molyneaux had by no means given up her strenuous efforts to force Rosamond's nature to a resemblance to her own. That her efforts had failed she recognized with much bitterness,

though the conviction only made her exert her authority with increased vigor.

And, to be just to her, let it be said, she followed her conscience in the up-bringing of her one daughter. Narrow-minded and uncultured as she was, completely devoid of imagination, and unable, even by the aid of the somewhat stern affection she bore her child, to understand Rosamond, it is not to be wondered at that her efforts to form the girl's character should assume a look of cruelty, and become the means of estranging Rosamond from her.

And Rosamond's passionate love for her father, her devotion to him, her constant defense of his failings, made the estrangement between mother and daughter greater. For Mrs. Molyneaux felt, and with some reason, that she had a severe trial in the life led by her husband; yet she failed to see that she had been partly the cause of his excesses. Consequently she expected sympathy, a sympathy from Rosamond which she did not get, for Rosamond, while feeling keenly her father's mode of life and its attendant shame, felt, too that her mother might have prevented the evil from growing to its present dimensions if she had taken her father in the right way

from the beginning. But Mrs. Molyneaux was one of those women who, having adopted a mode of treatment which by reason of its correspondence to their own code of rectitude appears the best, adhere to it in the face of disastrous failure.

In such an atmosphere had Rosamond reached her girlhood. Her one refuge in the disturbed household was in study; and so successfully had she applied herself to self-improvement that at fifteen she was the leading girl in her school. She had successfully passed the High School examination, and was preparing for the matriculation.

Abbie, who was now almost seventeen years of age, had left school, and attained to the dignity of long dresses. Abbie was never a great student, and Mrs. Matheson had strong views on the subject of "over-education," as she termed it, so that Abbie had been allowed to escape examinations of all kinds. She had greatly rejoiced, nevertheless, in Rosamond's successes, and the two were as fast friends as ever.

Indeed this friendship was the one bright thing in her life. Abbie's unfailing fund of trust and affection and admiration for Rosamond sustained

a nature dowered in no small degree with the hunger for these things, which by force of circumstances was cut off from her legitimate share of them. Yet, let it be understood that the admiration for which she craved was rather the loving approval of those whom she loved and respected, than the ordinary girlish desire to be admired for what share of good looks nature had endowed her with, or those intellectual gifts of which she knew herself possessed.

Rosamond was not vain: she scarcely gave a thought to her personal appearance beyond a desire to be neat. She had lived so much more vividly the inner life into which, by uncongenial home surroundings, she had been driven, that she was still quite childlike in her ideas about many things. She dreamed dreams—as most girls do—but they would have made many a girl of her age laugh contemptuously as at a child, had they been put into words.

Some of the quaint fancies that came to her were written to Justin Fortescue, who was still the friend to whom she could write freely.

Unconsciously, she had drawn a picture to herself of Justin as very much older than he was in reality; and behind her pen she could and

did reveal more of her real nature than in any other way. Even to Abbie, the laughter-loving and warm-hearted, she could not give the key to that self which was the best part of her.

Abbie was wholesomely matter-of-fact, and could no more have entered into or sympathized with Rosamond's needs than a light-hearted kitten. So, though this friendship was, after her father's love, the most precious thing in her life, yet it was inadequate. In study and reading—in short in the world of books—Rosamond was striving to fill up for herself the great empty world in which she found herself. And she was happy in those days, finding a refuge in her bookland from the jar and fret of her home. Yet she was not so selfishly engrossed in her studies as to forego the ordinary affectionate intercourse of the household. To her mother, she was always gently kind, and if her manners were not very demonstrative, it was part of her character, rather than deliberate coldness. Rosamond had long since accepted the fact that her mother did not and could not understand her.

That reserve which was the outcome of her self-repression had grown with her since the days when she had heard her mother laugh at her

childish fancies, and scoff at her quaint imaginings. There was none of the trust and confidence between mother and daughter such as would have made both their lives happier.

Mrs. Molyneaux felt the absence of the confidence without being able to account for it. Now that Rosamond was older, and at that age when her mother might lawfully look toward companionship, they were more estranged than ever.

When Rosamond's name came out in the honor lists at her various examinations, when she returned from the Christmas display and prize distribution laden with prizes, Mrs. Molyneaux expressed none of the pride she felt in her child's success. It was from her father that Rosamond received loving approval. He did not conceal his delight at her success, and he declared repeatedly that she should go to an English college "by-and-by."

But the time for that long-promised trip to England seemed further off than ever.

Eustace Molyneaux sighed again as he looked at Rosamond moving about his sick room. She was tall for her age, and deft and light in her movements, with a certain quick grace that was yet never hasty.

"You are almost a woman, mavourneen," her father said at last, watching her lovingly.

"Yes, dad, I'll soon be sixteen," she said, turning round, with the tenderest smile in her dark eyes. She was making tea over a spirit lamp. She poured it now into two cups, and brought one to her father.

"And now tell me that your tea is nice," she said laughing. Mr. Molyneaux sipped it abstractedly, looking at her the while.

"Why has your mother taken these men into the house?" he said querulously. "That fellow Ridgway is insufferable. If she had taken in decent fellows as boarders it wouldn't have mattered much, though in any case she won't find keeping them a paying concern. But these uncouth specimens she has taken in are perfectly insufferable."

"They are horrid—especially Ridgway," assented Rosamond, a frown darkening her face for a moment. "But, daddy, dear, we need not mind them much, you and I; they will keep out of our way."

"Will they? I doubt it. If your mother had had a little patience until I got right, things need not have come to this pass. But she was

always obstinate, and she'll see this out to the end."

"Well, of course there was no money coming in, and she felt something had to be done," Rosamond said. "I wish I were eighteen that I might get the money left me by dear Murray Campbell." She sighed.

"No, no; that money is for yourself. It's not to be touched, no matter how things go. Perhaps—when I am gone—" Rosamond darted to him and stopped his lips with her hand.

"Daddy, daddy dear, don't say that! I can't bear it," she cried passionately. "You are to get well—you *must*!"

He looked at her wistfully.

"Mavourneen, it is creeping on—this shadow," he said. "I have abused this body of mine too long: it is worn out before its time."

The words and what they implied were a life's confession. No one realized more fully the evils of his life, its shame and ruin, than Eustace Molyneux himself in his sober moments. And his repeated attacks of illness of late had thoroughly aroused him to a sense of his impending end.

"Let us go away, somewhere together, just you

and I, dad," said Rosamond, one day, at this time; "away from the noise and worry of things, and then you will get well."

"I ought to try to pull through, if only for your sake, mavourneen," he returned. "But—I've been a bad father to you, little one."

Rosamond stopped his lips with her hand, imperiously.

"You shall not say such things, dad. You have been the best of fathers to me, always."

He smiled at her whimsically, but her praise and her love were very sweet to him.

"Well, you have been the best of daughters, mavourneen," he said, and then sat thoughtful for a while, the lines deepening on his forehead, his head leaning on his hand. He looked across the low roofs of the houses opposite, to where the sunset was reddening the sky behind the mountain.

Rosamond broke in upon his reverie with girlish impatience.

"Do say you will leave Cape Town, and take me with you, dad," she entreated. "There is that invitation from your friend, who lives on the Karoo—Mr. Malherbe."

"True. I had forgotten. A week or two there

would do us good. It will be very quiet, remember, mavourneen, and you will tire of it after a day or two."

Rosamond protested vigorously that she would do no such thing.

Then a sudden thought occurred to them both.

"What will mother say?"

They looked at each other doubtfully.

She—who—must—be—obeyed might refuse to let them go without her—and with her, though neither shaped the thought, both felt there would be neither rest nor change.

"It would be too quiet for mother," said Rosamond brightening; "she will scarcely care to leave town now that the boarders have to be attended to."

Then as she spoke, Mrs. Molyneaux's loud voice reached them from below, and they knew she was scolding. Her husband sighed, and Rosamond quickly closed the door. "It would be a blessed thing to get away from Cape Town even for a week," her father said.

"I will see what mother thinks of it this very evening," rejoined Rosamond brightly. He shook a warning finger at her smiling the while.

“Diplomacy, mavourneen, diplomacy!”

“Diplomacy, dad!” echoed she, going out, laughing.

CHAPTER IX.

ON A KAROO FARM.

FROM ROSAMOND MOLYNEAUX TO JUSTIN FORTESCUE.

MY DEAR JUSTIN:

Farewell for a time to Cape Town and its muddy streets, and farewell, a long farewell to all exams.

Here are father and I the guests of Mr. Peter Malherbe, and comfortably lost in a household of twenty-five on a Karoo farm. There are three generations and five nationalities comprised in the household, and the homestead and its surroundings are like a miniature village.

Father is already looking better for the change. He had been ailing for a long time, and I was delighted when his friend Mr. Malherbe gave him this invitation—delighted, too, when I was included in it.

It is difficult to realize that barely a week ago I was going through the papers for the matriculation exam. It seems years ago. The names

of the successful candidates will of course not be out for six weeks or two months yet, but out here one forgets to worry about such things.

And now let me thank you most gratefully for so kindly remembering my birthday. Every year your gift comes as a surprise because, you see, I expect you to forget it, and I am pleasantly disappointed. And what a delicious surprise it was this time! The Ruskin books are what I have been longing for as the unattainable, and lo! they come to prove that my "old friend" has a good memory and a kindly, generous heart. They are here with me, and have given me hours of the keenest joy, deepened by the surroundings in which I find myself.

The solitude (in spite of twenty-five), the vastness, the loveliness of this place stir me inexplicably. I am proud to call it my native land, and every dawn bid it "good morrow" with a stronger love. I belong to the country—not the town. The kopjes, the veldt, the mysterious silence, the loneliness that is never lonely—the night sky with its myriad jewels, the night wind with its wondrous magic music, the dawn breaking over the low hills and flooding the world in a new glory—all these things are new and yet very, very old

and dear to me. Do you know what I mean, I wonder? I like to think you understand me better than any one else—even dad. I like to think that you, too, have been stirred by these things that move me. What else is friendship if it be not the perfection of understanding in souls?

Cape Town is a whole continent away from this place, surely? Even the people are different. There is a dear old grandfather and grandmother, loving and beloved; a married daughter and her husband and six children (such quaint mites some of them) a married son, and his wife and child; two unmarried sons and one unmarried daughter, and the rest are cousins or some close relations, except the governess, who is a Dane, but has lived in England the greater part of her life.

There are two dwelling houses, one close to the other, and they are all like one big family.

Maria, the unmarried daughter is old; at least, she must be twenty-five, though dad says that is not at all old. She is teaching me to cook, because she is housekeeper, and is a splendid cook. Fritz and Otto, the two unmarried sons, have been to college, and preferred being farmers to clerks in a town—which shows their wisdom. They are

teaching me to ride—so you see my education is going forward still! Fritz and I go for long walks too. He is very well read and talks well. Otto is quieter and somewhat shy.

We return to Cape Town at the end of August, when the winter will be over, and the oaks will be putting on their fresh garb; I hope to bring father back quite strong, this place is doing him so much good.

Just before we left town he was so ill that I began to anticipate the worst, but now, thank God, he is recovering his health quite wonderfully.

He is all my world, you know, and I can not think what my life would be without him. Whether it is my fault or not, my mother and I do not seem able to understand each other. She has tried all my life to make me what she wished, and being of a somewhat self-willed disposition I have, unconsciously though it was, always chosen to be different. Hence her disappointment in me, her only daughter. I can see that now, though it has only grown upon me of late. Did I tell you that when father fell ill, she took in two boarders? This, of course, gives her extra work and anxiety in the house, and father objected strongly for that and other reasons.

Unfortunately the men she has taken are not nice. One, a Mr. Ridgway, is horrid, a forward, vulgar fellow; the other is a quiet man, but a hypochondriac, and consequently hard to please.

You see I tell you everything, feeling that you will be interested and you will understand.

Abbie Matheson wrote me a long letter since I left town. Abbie is Miss Matheson now, since her sister Essie was married.

The day she wrote was the anniversary of Murray Campbell's death; she remembered it as usual, and went to Maitland to put a wreath on his grave. Dear, faithful, true-hearted Abbie! Am I not singularly blessed in my friends?

Fritz Malherbe is waiting for me now, so I must close this and take it in to N—— the nearest town, which is twenty minutes' ride from the farm.

Father sends his kindest remembrances and bids me say that when he was ill in Cape Town he made his will and left me in your charge, as the most precious belonging he had.

Your affectionate friend,

ROSAMOND MOLYNEAUX.

FROM ROSAMOND MOLYNEAUX TO ABIGAIL
MATHESON.

MY DEAREST ABBIE:

WE would have been on our way to Cape Town to-day, but I have had an adventure which ended in a sprained ankle for me, so that I am, perforce, laid up for some days longer than we intended staying.

Did I tell you of a Mr. Alan Craig in my former letters? He is the hero of the adventure. He is a Scotchman who is working on the farm here, having come, as he himself puts it, "off the road," which means he was a tramp. Just think of it, Abbie! A man of thirty—that's young for a man—with a University education, the son of an Edinburgh doctor, and he himself having passed all the medical exams, except the final—just think of such a man brought by dissipation to working as a common laborer on a farm, when he could fill any situation in the city!

He is a handsome man, tall and well built, and to look at him one would never guess he was a victim to that terrible soul-destroyer, drink. He is "steady" now, and has been since he came to Mr. Malherbe's farm some six months ago. He gives all his money, except what will get him

the bare necessities of life, into Mr. Malherbe's keeping so as to keep out of temptation's way.

I do feel so sorry for him—as well as grateful for risking his life to save mine. A bull with a sad record was the third actor in what might have been a tragedy, but still retains, owing to Mr. Craig's presence of mind and courage, the elements of comedy.

This bull, let me tell you, had killed a Kaffir some days previous to my adventure with him. He was kept in a large enclosure some distance from the homestead, and into this I, in all ignorance of the risk, ventured to go.

I can scarcely recall coherently the whole incident, for I was never so terrified in all my life as at the moment I saw that awful beast stamping down toward me. I was petrified with fright, and unable to move. Mr. Craig, appearing from somewhere suddenly, called to me to run out by the gate at the side, which was only fastened by a primitive piece of wood in an iron clasp. How I got out I never knew. Mr. Craig intercepted the bull in time to let me escape, and when I got out I ran without stopping until I fell over a heap of bricks close to the homestead, and sprained my ankle.

A brave girl you will say! Such cowardice comes of being city-bred, I suppose.

To add to the trouble, Mr. Craig has sprained his arm, which is in a sling ever since. He says it is nothing, but Mrs. Peter Malherbe told me it is a bad sprain. He also barely escaped with his life from that terrible brute, which has since become butcher's meat, as he was too dangerous to be left alive.

When I thanked Mr. Craig for saving my life at the risk of his own, he replied that he did not hold his life so dear, as it did not matter much how soon it ended; and this was not said in a boasting way, but quietly.

We have had some long talks together, being both disabled. He is a gentleman, Abbie, and your kind heart would ache for him if you heard his story. He did not spare himself in its recital, realizing fully what he has missed in life through his own fault. He says he broke his mother's heart. He has a brother and sister in Scotland, and the sister seems the only living creature he cares about. Janet is her name, and he showed me a photograph of her—a pretty, gentle-looking girl of about twenty.

Have I quite exhausted your patience about

Mr. Craig? Forgive me, if so. My ankle is much better, so as father is anxious to return to town, we shall leave here in a few days' time. Father is quite his old self again, but is tired of the country. I could stay here forever, except that one becomes quite heathenish from having no church and never a priest within miles of the place.

Of course the Malherbes drive into N—— now and then to the Dutch Reformed Church. Now, dear, until we meet, which will be soon after the arrival of this letter,

Your affectionate friend,

ROSAMOND MOLYNEAUX.

Leaning on a stick, Rosamond, having finished her letter, hobbled to the window which overlooked the broad wooden stoop. Fritz Malherbe and Alan Craig were standing in front of the house the farmer holding his horse's reins, and talking freely to Craig.

"Mr. Fritz, I have kept you an unconscionable time waiting for this letter, I'm afraid," said Rosamond, leaning on the window sill and smiling at them both through the open window.

"Oh, no, Miss Molyneaux. There's lots of time. We take life without hurry on the farm, you know. It's not like town."

The young fellow came leisurely on to the veranda, having thrown the reins to Craig. He was tall, too tall for his build, for he looked reedy, but he had a pleasant face, not unhandsome.

"I wish you could ride in with me to N——" he said, taking the envelope, and putting it carefully in his pocket.

Rosamond smiled ruefully.

"No chance of my being allowed, I fear," she said. "Though I am positively longing for a ride."

"Oh, we must manage to have another ride before you leave the farm." said Fritz. "Why are you and Mr. Molyneaux hurrying away so soon?"

"Father wants to go, but I don't. I just revel in farm life, and can not imagine how I shall settle down in the city again."

"Has not the bull episode put you a little out of conceit with the farm?" asked Fritz. "I fancied——"

"Not at all," said Rosamond hastily. "And that reminds me that I have not seen my 'valiant preserver' to-day to ask about his arm." She leaned farther out of the window, and spoke to Alan Craig. "I wish you were as near complete

recovery as I am, Mr. Craig," she said; "how is the arm to-day?"

"It is well—almost," returned Craig flushing a little under his tanned skin, yet speaking quite easily. Only a very close observer would notice that he started when Rosamond spoke to him. "It was never really anything to make a fuss of."

"Ah, so you say, but Mrs. Peter Malherbe tells a different story. I wish you would not make so light of your sprain. It makes me seem so unnecessarily fussy over mine."

Rosamond laughed, and the two men smiled in sympathy.

"I don't think you ought to stand so long," said Craig, after a pause.

"No, by Jove, you shouldn't, Miss Molyneaux, I quite forgot. Do go and sit down. Shall I come in to help you? Do let me!" Fritz, overcome with remorse, jumped in through the open window before Rosamond had time to protest.

Craig watched them, and a wistful look came over his face as his eyes followed them, Rosamond, with laughing remonstrance, leaning on Fritz's arm, as he led her to the lounge opposite the window. He settled the cushions behind her with

clumsy eagerness, leaving her in much secret discomfort, though she smiled and thanked him.

But her glance oftener wandered to the silent figure outside, and within hearing distance. When Fritz at length took himself off, Rosamond called Craig to her, prompted by a variety of feelings. He looked lonely, she thought, and the shadow under which he lived appealed to her sympathy.

But Mr. Molyneaux, brisk and debonair, entering the room, was plainly not too pleased to see Craig at the open window in converse with Rosamond.

"Mavourneen, that fellow hangs round you too much for my fancy," he said when Alan Craig went away.

Rosamond's face flushed, as she turned to her father in surprise.

"Hangs round me, father! Do you know that I called him to the window? He has never approached me—it is I who have spoken first every time. One can not be ungrateful or ungracious to the man who has saved one's life."

"No, no, certainly not," assented her father, hastily, "But—well, I'm glad we are going to town soon.'

"Why—in this particular instance, father?" Rosamond had always an independent air; partly the result of her home circumstances, partly characteristic. It was not impertinent, but it was frankly independent.

Her clear gray eyes met her father's questioningly. This outburst had surprised her, and she was in utter ignorance of his surmises about Craig's obvious partiality for her society.

"If you don't know, I still have my little girl, mavourneen," her father said, with a change of look and tone.

"I know you don't like Mr. Craig, at least you don't like me to talk to him, because he is only a farm hand. But, remember, father, he is gently born, and ought to be very much better off than he is. I feel sorry for him—and, in spite of your stern looks, so, I am sure, do you. Come now, confess! You do feel sorry for him, don't you?"

She caught the lapels of his coat in her hands and laughed up at him.

"Poor devil! If it were not for my little girl, perhaps I should be worse off than he," said Eustace Molyneaux.

It was not often he made reference to his evil habits and Rosamond's eyes filled with sudden tears. She drew his face down to hers and kissed him.

CHAPTER X.

JOY AND SORROW.

MRS. MOLYNEAUX was, for once in her life, without a grievance. But she was not any happier in consequence.

Her husband had been beyond reproach since his return from the Karoo, and Rosamond, having taken up housekeeping, was proving herself exceedingly useful.

But these things, together with the fact that, under protest from her husband, she was keeping the boarders who had taken up their quarters in the house, failed to make her content. She had acquired the habit of grumbling—her enemies said she had been born with it, but with them we do not number—and like King Gama, her song—if she could sing—would be:

“Oh, isn't this world extremely flat
When there's nothing whatever to grumble at?”

So Mrs. Molyneaux started a grievance—which led to unexpected results.

Rosamond was settling some flowers in vases

for the drawing-room one morning, after having seen her father off "down town" to his office. Mrs. Molyneaux came in, and there was an ominous frown on her not uncomely face. A massive frame, a high complexion and a strident voice all gave evidence of her robust health. The years had not lessened, but increased her avoirdupois.

She stood looking at Rosamond for a few minutes in silence.

"Where did them flowers come from?" she asked, presently, in no very amiable tone.

"I got them from a colored woman at the gate. Father bought them for me," returned Rosamond, who, being accustomed to her mother's usual mode of address, merely surmised that Sannie or Mena, the black domestics, had roused their mistress' wrath—a not uncommon occurrence.

"Humph! a nice way to be throwing money about, as if we was millionaires, and meat gone up a penny in the pound! And you'll pay out good money for that trash when you won't take the bokay that Mr. Ridgway brought you, and paid seven and six for it, if he paid a penny."

Rosamond looked at her mother as she answered in a purposely quiet tone: "I decline to take flowers, or anything, from that man. If my

father knew how he has persecuted me since our return from Karoo, Ridgway would long since have been requested to leave the house."

"Would he, indeed? I think *I* have some say in that. And persecution you call it? In my young days the girls was not too grand to take an honest man's presents. But you are chock full of your father's English pride."

Rosamond's hands trembled, and her eyes were blinded with bitter tears, which she checked quietly, going on with her arrangement of the vases.

"Let me tell you, I won't have Mr. Ridgway offended. I'm sure I don't know what you look for, if you look higher than him—a man with three shops of his own and doing well. You'd have a comfortable home, and Ridgway would let you do the fine lady to your heart's content. But you don't know what's good for you, seeing as you're only a child yet, for all your examinations—that you think make you so much cleverer than your mother."

Still Rosamond was silent. This taunt about her education was not a new one. It was a favorite one of her mother's, whose own imagination was its only basis.

"And what use is them certificates as you've got hanging up on the walls of your room? So much waste paper, say I. Another girl with less stuck-uppishness would have gone to earn her own living. Look at Bessie Le Roux and Johanna Poezyn, earning their eight and ten pounds a month, and them with not half your education."

"You know very well, mother, that it is not my wish to stay at home as I am doing. You know that father will not hear of my going out to work as I wished to do."

"Oh, I know you don't want to be at home," returned her mother, working herself up into a fury. "Your home ain't good enough for you with your Latin and Greek and French and gibberish. And your own mother ain't good enough for you neither, nor the gentlemen that's keeping a roof over your head by their honest money ain't enough for you. And I wonder where you'd be to-day, or your learning either, if it had not been for me as slaved and wore myself out to keep you at school, and to bring you up right. But you've never been any comfort to me—not from the day you was born."

Mrs. Molyneaux paused for want of breath.

The sight of Rosamond, outwardly self-controlled, calm and dignified, had wrought her to an ungovernable rage, in which the pent-up feelings of months found vent.

"I will ask my father to let me take a situation," Rosamond said, struggling hard to keep back the tears that blinded her. Her hands moved mechanically among the flowers, but she was quite unconscious of anything except the crushing sense of pain and shame and deep humiliation.

Since her return, the life in the household had gone with unusual smoothness. Her mother had seemed pleased, and even gratified, when Rosamond showed an aptitude for household duties. They had been thrown more together than when Rosamond went to school, and the girl found much to admire in her mother's methodical ways in housekeeping, and openly expressed her admiration.

But since Albert Ridgway had shown marked attentions to Rosamond, and she had made no disguise of her dislike of him and them, her mother considered that she had good reason to complain of an undutiful daughter. For in Mrs. Molyneaux's eyes he was a man of means,

and his somewhat stocky figure and common face were more than atoned for by the dimensions of his bank-book. Of the utter absence of refinement in his speech and manners, of his defective education, and of his vulgar character she was oblivious—or rather they caused her to regard him with more complacency, he being, as she said, by reason of these things “one of ourselves.”

To Rosamond, who, up to this, had few acquaintances among men, and whose father was the only man she understood, Ridgway was a revelation of an unpleasant nature. Though brought up in the city, Rosamond’s home circumstances, and her own natural character, had prevented her from mixing with the world. Her universe was comprised of her home and her school.

This man, with his leering face, waylaying her with boxes of sweets, flowers, gloves, and a variety of other things which he thought she liked, had become, by reason of his persistence, a source of uneasiness and extreme disgust.

She feared to speak to her father about the matter, knowing that a scene with her mother would then be inevitable, because Ridgway

would be told to leave the house. And life having gone smoothly for them of late, she bore the annoyance in silence, rather than disturb her father.

Mr. Molyneaux, while apparently quite recovered from his last attack, was in truth far from well. Rosamond did not know that her father was suffering from an acute affection of the heart, which made his length of days uncertain. Indeed, he bade her good-by each morning with a strong inner consciousness that it might be the last time he would look on her face. Their evenings were spent together—and to these Rosamond looked forward with loving eagerness. It was no one's fault that Mrs. Molyneaux found herself outside their enjoyments; the things they cared for had no pleasure for her. Books were foolishness not fit for a sensible person's time or attention—even the walks which they took under the starlit sky or in the moonlight had no attraction for her.

"I could never see the fun of putting yourself out of breath walking to a place you could go to by tram in the broad day," she said on more than one occasion. "If it's the Jetty, you can see it from the upper story windows well enough, and

if it's the mountain, it's plain enough to be seen without tiring yourself out to walk miles in the night to get a close look."

To Rosamond these evening rambles were delightful. The magic of the night lent an air of mystery to the city and its massive background—to the bay—to the busy streets.

Yet because Mrs. Molyneaux placed herself outside of these simple pleasures, she felt aggrieved that her husband and child should enjoy them without her. Now that Rosamond was approaching womanhood, and thus growing beyond her control—now that the days were past in which a quick blow or a harsh word drove the child to her little room under the roof, Mrs. Molyneaux found her only power in speech.

Yet she loved the child and yearned for love in return, and as the years passed and they drew no nearer to each other, the mother's heart within her grew bitter. Secretly in her presence, but openly in her absence, she gloried in Rosamond's unfolding beauty, her quiet refinement of manner, her cleverness. Yet she could bring herself to desire no higher plane for her child than to rule Albert Ridgway and his three shops.

It was with many heart-searchings and prob-

ings of conscience that Rosamond, in her dawning womanhood, regarded her attitude to her mother. She longed to find some bond of sympathy and affection that would bring them nearer to each other. Yet her mother's reiterated reproaches but served to define the situation with stronger emphasis, and instead of healing served to widen the breach. So the months dragged on and Rosamond did not find life grow easier. Now that her school days were past there was no escape from the continual jar and fret of her home.

Because of this it was with not a little eagerness she turned to her mother to say, "I will ask my father to let me take a situation. It is what I have always longed for."

But her mother caught the tone of eagerness, and quickly changed her attack.

"Oh, of course, you'd be glad enough to get away from your home. And you'll ask your father? Your father! You know well enough he will not let you soil them white fingers of yours, for he spoils you disgracefully. No, you'll not ask your father, nor you'll not leave your home. I've not slaved for you for close on seventeen years to have you leaving me now with a houseful of work, and go out and do the lady in an office."

The tears fell slowly, heavily, from the girl's eyes. It was the first time for years that she had cried under her mother's anger. Usually she kept a tranquil face and an even voice and these served to add fuel to her mother's wrath, for she did not understand such self-control as her daughter was capable of. The sight of Rosamond's tears softened her mother at once.

"There, child!" she said huskily, with a quick change of tone, and placing her hand about the girl's shoulder. "I didn't mean to make you cry. You're my only child, and I want to make you happy. Only there's something in you that's always driving me to say hard things when I don't mean them."

Rosamond's heart was too full of bitterness for her to answer gently. She brushed aside the tears with an impatient gesture, and said, somewhat unsteadily:

"I don't know why I'm crying. I ought to be accustomed to—this sort of thing."

"Don't be angry with your mother, Rosamond. I do want you to be happy, but somehow we don't seem ever to agree about the way. I know I've a hasty temper and a sharp tongue, but

there—you know I love you through it all, don't you?"

Mrs. Molyneaux, coarser-grained than her child, realized but very vaguely the pain she had caused.

She brushed back the dark, curling locks from Rosamond's forehead with a gentle touch, looking pleadingly into her tear-stained face the while. And Rosamond with downcast lids was battling unsuccessfully with a wild desire to give vent to the pent-up misery of her heart—the accumulated misery of her remembered years. Often she had asked herself why had she been made so opposed in every way to her mother; why they had not one taste in common; why the commandment of honor to parents weighed so heavily on her? And she had found no answer yet.

She sighed now and looked into her mother's eyes—eyes softened and beautified for the nonce by maternal love. Then she drew her mother's face down gently to hers and kissed her.

"God made us different, mother, and we must just make the best of each other," she said softly.

CHAPTER XI.

AN INVITATION.

"OH, Rosamond, he has come! And he is perfectly lovely! And I'm going to be a sister to him."

Thus Abbie Matheson announced herself, one afternoon a few days later. Abbie was now "Miss Matheson," but all the dignity of trailing skirts could not quite transform the merry school-girl into a young lady of the period. For one thing, Abbie's short, ruddy-brown locks refused to lengthen themselves in keeping with her new position, and they kept falling in short, obstreperous curls about her neck and ears on the very slightest provocation with very charming effect, but an utter absence of what Abbie called "grown-uppishness." Her curls absolutely refused to be twisted into the prevailing mode, and Abbie sighed, and gave them their way.

Ian Grant declared the result delicious, but, then Ian Grant was a prejudiced observer, being Abbie's affianced husband.

Abbie threw her gloves and sunshade into one chair of Mrs. Molyneaux's drawing-room, and settled herself in another.

"I've come to ask you and Rosamond and Mr. Molyneaux to come over to the house this evening. We've a sort of informal party to meet my cousin, Colin Ross, who arrived by to-day's mail boat. Mother says she absolutely will not take a refusal."

Though she spoke confidently, Abbie looked at Mrs. Molyneaux doubtfully, for that good lady was somewhat jealous of her daughter's intimacy with the Mathesons. Their pleasant house in "The Gardens" of Cape Town was the resort of a variety of Abbie's friends of both sexes. Mrs. Matheson had married all her girls well, and Abbie was the youngest and the favorite, so she ruled her house as a spoiled girl—as far spoiled that is, as such a lovable nature could be.

Mrs. Molyneaux had, up to the present, refused to allow Rosamond to be present at Abbie's frequent gatherings, but she felt that the time had come when a refusal would be more than churlish. Nevertheless, she had expressed herself vigorously on the subject of Abbie's guests.

"Them young clerks she has there is not worth

their salt," she would say, acridly. "For all their grand airs and their 'At Homes' the Mathe-sons is no better than ourselves—no, nor half as good if it comes to that."

To all of which Rosamond would listen hopelessly.

But, to-day, in her unusual fit of remorse, Mrs. Molyneaux seized eagerly on the invitation.

"Of course, we'll go, all of us, Abbie," she said pleasantly. "Is he grown up, this new cousin of yours?"

"He is twenty-seven. I don't know whether you'd quite call that grown up or not." Abbie's eyes danced. "He's six feet in his stockings and built in proportion. There's no doubt he grew when he set about it. And he's just as nice and Scotch as can be. I was a bit awed by his superior height and his very superior manner for about ten minutes, but his cousinship thawed then, and we got along famously."

Mrs. Molyneaux went away to give various directions to her domestics as to what was to be done during her absence that evening, and when the two girls were left alone Abbie broke out with "I was afraid your mother would refuse—and

we're going to have such a jolly evening. Colin sings divinely and plays the fiddle."

"Who else will be there?" asked Rosamond, who had outgrown her shyness in a crowd.

"Natalie Burgiss and her brother Ted, Ella Foster and Georgie, Hilda Payne and her shadow, Jack Robinson, and the respected parents of these young people, with— Oh, I forgot a friend of Colin's—Alan Craig."

"Alan Craig!" echoed Rosamond in surprise. "Could it be my Alan Craig? I mean that one I met at Malherbe's. You remember I told you about him?"

"I remember. The hero of your accident. What fun if this be the same man! Colin met him to-day by the merest chance. They had been friends in Edinburgh, and Colin knows Mr. Craig's people. It struck me—but, of course, it was the wildest of guesses—that Colin rather admires Mr. Craig's sister whose name is Janet."

"It must be the same! Mr. Craig's sister is named Janet," said Rosamond.

"Which all goes to prove that you will meet your brave deliverer in a few hours' time," Abbie looked at her friend quizzically, "so make yourself very spruce, dear. Wear that white

China silk of yours! White is your color. It makes me look a freckled fright." Abbie rubbed her round cheeks ruefully, and looked with undisguised admiration at Rosamond's smooth, rose-flushed face, with its delicate transparent look, and the great dark gray eyes, looking darker by contrast with its fairness.

"I must go now," said Abbie, rising precipitately from her chair, and seizing her gloves and parasol. "There are about a hundred things I have to do for the mother before to-night. Now, if you don't do me credit to-night as a product of the soil, I'll disown you forever. Colin has a poor opinion of Colonists, so I want to convert him." She laughed, and kissing her hand to Rosamond, vanished through the hall and into the street with a certain graceful swiftness that somehow reminded one of a butterfly.

Rosamond went to her room with some pleasurable excitement tingling in her veins. This was almost her first party, and there she was to meet Abbie's incomparable cousin, and Alan Craig. She fell to wondering how the latter had been given and had accepted the invitation of Colin Ross. When at the farm, though measurably above the other laborers there, yet he had

not been treated differently to them, nor did he seem to expect anything different. Yet here he was (if it were he) about to meet on equal footing the whole of her world and those who considered themselves as the elect thereof. For Cape Town is not behind any other city in its number of "classes" and in each there are the elect.

Rosamond dressed herself in a somewhat abstracted frame of mind, so that she paid but little heed to the effect of her white silk gown, with its low collar showing her snowy throat, and its short sleeves coming to the elbow showing the white rounded arms and slender hands. Instinctively she had perfect taste in dress, and on this point, as on so many others, she and her mother disagreed. The simplicity which Rosamond chose was as a poverty-stricken meagerness to the riotous taste of her mother, who loaded herself with cheap jewelry and gaudy, ill-chosen clothes.

Rosamond gave a sigh of relief when she saw that her mother had donned a soft black silk gown instead of gaudier garb. Her father in his well-worn, carefully-brushed black looked what he was—refined and gentlemanly.

As the distance they had to go was short and

the night fine, the three walked; though Mrs. Molyneaux suggested that to arrive in a cab would be more "genteel." However she was over-ruled for once by her husband.

Mrs. Matheson, a small sunny-faced woman who had never quite lost her Scotch accent, met them in the hall when they arrived, and Abbie appeared a few minutes later looking more like a kitten than ever, and plainly excited. Abbie took Rosamond and her mother off upstairs to remove their wraps, and Mrs. Matheson brought Mr. Molyneaux into the large pleasant drawing-room already occupied by her husband, her nephew and his newly-found friend Alan Craig. The latter could scarcely be recognized by Eustace Molyneaux, so great was the change effected in his appearance by suitable clothing and an indefinable, subtle transformation in his bearing. He held his head high, his figure erect, his voice was polished, even, and not unmusical, his manner was cool and quiet—yet not in these things could the change be said to lie. It was something touching the man's own character which was felt rather than capable of expression.

Colin Ross fulfilled Abbie's description of him—tall, well-built, with the air and bearing of a man

of the world, a somewhat bored expression, a drawl in his voice, but withal at the core what men call a good fellow.

It was characteristic of him that he had asked his aunt to invite Alan Craig to the informal gathering called together to meet him. None knew better than he that Craig was a self-made outcast from his home—that there were gentle hearts in Scotland mourning for him with deeper sorrow than if he were dead—but in spite of these things, nay, perhaps, because of them, he held out a friendly hand to the wanderer, and greeted him with the friendship of happier years. Abbie's father was a typical Scot, hard-headed, but withal genial; a man who had worked successfully to give his sons and daughters every worldly advantage and who now looked forward to easy days in a luxurious home, with his children and his children's children to make sunshine in his declining years.

The entrance of Mr. Molyneaux was greeted by him with a hearty welcome, and Alan Craig straightened himself involuntarily as one who faces a possible enemy.

After exchanging a few words with Colin Ross, Mr. Molyneaux turned to speak to Craig.

"We have met before, I think," he said, somewhat stiffly. Alan bowed with equal stiffness.

"We have, Mr. Molyneaux, but under very different circumstances."

"You have given up—farming?" There was a subtle antagonism in his voice and manner.

"For a time."

"I've been trying to persuade him to go back to Scotland, Mr. Molyneaux," broke in Colin Ross, "but this country seems to have taken such a grip on him. Wonderful country this, where they say—with all respect to our own—every woman has a past and every man a future."

Colin stroked his blonde mustache with open complacency.

"Now that," said Mr. Matheson, screwing up his eyes and looking quizzical, "that is what one might call a smart saying. But like most of the smart sayings it leaves a wide margin for exaggeration—a grain of truth to a pound of fine language."

"But the truth is there, uncle," said Colin, without heat—much indeed, as if he said: "The night is fine."

"Do you intend to adopt the country?" asked Mr. Molyneaux. "We who have done so have

found much to be proud of in the land of our adoption. I hope you do not swell the chorus of malcontents who grumble at everything because it is not like 'home.' "

"Well, I haven't had time or cause to grumble yet," said Colin, slowly, and with twinkling eyes. "And as to adopting South Africa—" Here he broke off abruptly, for Abbie entered with Rosamond, and immediately behind them came a bevy of people, mostly young.

Rosamond greeted Mr. Matheson, and then turned to Alan Craig. There was surprise and pleasure in her glance as she swiftly noted his altered appearance.

Colin Ross was bantering Abbie, some one claimed Mr. Molyneaux's attention, and Rosamond found herself free to speak to Craig.

"I am so glad," she said, "that you left the farm. When did you come to town?"

"Three days ago. I couldn't stay there any longer. After you went it was miserable."

"They were not unkind to you?"

"They? Oh, you mean the Malherbes? No—but the place seemed different after you went."

"How strange that Mr. Ross and you should

meet on the very day of his arrival in the Colony; Abbie told me of it."

"We were college chums. He knows my people. Yes, it was the luckiest thing that has happened me for years—this meeting—I little thought this time yesterday I should have this pleasure."

"Oho!" said Abbie, who was watching them furtively. "So that's the way the wind blows, Mr. Alan Craig! And oh, ye innocents! look at my guileless Rosamond! She does not see a bit of it." Whereat Abbie laughed, and had thereby to deny information as to the cause to Ian Grant.

Meanwhile Rosamond was asking eager questions, and Craig was answering them, and both were so engrossed therein that neither saw Mrs. Molyneaux opposite, looking at them and especially at Rosamond with undisguised amazement. Every one was chattering merrily, and some one struck a chord on the piano. The room had filled quickly, and now held about thirty people. The chord was the opening of a lengthy performance by Hilda Payne.

And through it all Rosamond and Craig talked, sitting together and speaking in undertones.

Rosamond's sympathy was roused by Craig's position (or want of it); her gratitude to him as her preserver was and would always be intense; she longed to help him to raise himself from the depths to which he had fallen—the whole situation appealed to her womanliness, and, be it added, to her sense of romance.

So she listened gravely while he unfolded his plans for the future.

Suddenly she found her mother standing beside them, and there was an ominous glitter in her eyes as she said:

"Introduce your friend, Rosamond. I believe I haven't met him before."

Rosamond did so, reminding her mother of the debt she owed to Alan Craig.

"So you are that Mr. Craig! Well, my best thanks for your plucky act." Mrs. Molyneaux had on her "company manner," which included the mincing of her words, and an unvarying smile. Just at this juncture Abbie brought up Colin Ross.

"Rosamond, let me introduce my cousin. Colin, this is my very special and particular friend, and you must be very nice to her."

Rosamond laughed and gave her hand to Colin with charming frankness.

"Will you let me try, Miss Molyneaux?" he asked.

"I always feel that Abbie's relations are somehow relations of mine," she said, still laughing.

"We are cousins then henceforth? Shall we occupy this cozy corner while we settle the precise degree of kinship?" He indicated a window-recess near them and Rosamond went toward it.

"Now you two are all right," said Abbie, with a mock sigh. "Thank goodness!"

And she was off in the opposite direction to make an old lady who sat alone feel she was not being neglected.

Mrs. Molyneaux meanwhile was firing questions at Alan Craig which that gentleman found difficult to answer. His glance followed Rosamond and Colin Ross ruefully, but he turned politely to his merciless questioner.

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW COUSIN AND AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

ROSAMOND had never met any one quite like Colin Ross, and in her simplicity she was apt to set too great a value on his polished speech, his deferential manner, and his superficial cleverness.

She was drawn out of herself, too, by his skilful questioning, and felt herself with a little thrill voicing thoughts and opinions hitherto safely locked up in her reserve.

Then, too, with engaging frankness, Colin told her a great deal about himself. Indeed, to a more sophisticated listener he would have seemed painfully egotistical, but Rosamond listened with genuine interest, her dark eyes shining, her cheeks glowing with unwonted brightness and warmth.

After a time, Mrs. Matheson sought them out, and took Colin off to the piano to sing. Rosamond sat quietly in her corner and listened. She was keenly appreciative of music and especially of singing, though her own gifts were not above the ordinary.

A hush fell on the room as Colin's voice took up the song. It was an ordinary drawing-room ballad with nothing to recommend it but the fact that it was the latest popular favorite, but he sang it well. The choice of it was an index to his character—sentimental under an assumed cynicism, and mediocre under a veneer of brilliance. But Abbie, who had joined Rosamond in the window-recess, whispered ecstatic remarks in praise of the singer, and when he ceased she turned to Rosamond with a delighted face.

"Isn't Colin splendid?" she said, "and do you know that Ian has a face like angry Jove the whole evening. We've almost quarreled, so I left him with Natalie Burgiss."

"Why do you torment him so?" Rosamond said laughing.

"It is for his good," retorted Abbie, with a little toss of her curls. "But seriously, Rosamond are you enjoying the evening? I do want you to have what the Americans call a 'good time.' Colin seems to be playing cousin very well." She laughed and went on. "But he had better not go too far, or Mr. Alan Craig will pull him up short."

"You ridiculous child!" cried Rosamond,

laughing and blushing, yet looking a trifle startled too. "What nonsense you talk! Will you remember that these two men of the world must find me a very 'unlessoned girl,' especially Mr. Ross?"

"It is solid sense, my ancient friend," said Abbie nodding her head sagely. "And it is just as well you should know in time. But see how the lordly Colin distributes his smiles among that admiring bevy of women. They are gushing over his singing and he is carrying off their praise with a fine impersonal air. And there is Ian, looking everywhere for me." She laughed, and that betrayed her presence to a man who stood close to them but had not seen them.

He was of medium height, well-built and athletic looking, with a bronzed face which spoke of an open-air life under the southern sun. He had a strong, clever face, rather than a handsome one, and his expression in repose was somewhat grave. He drew aside the curtain which concealed the two girls, and his face brightened when he met their laughing glances.

"No confidences allowed," he said, seating himself beside Abbie, "unless, that is, I am permitted to hear them also."

"What, may I ask, have you done with the girl you left behind you?" asked Abbie, with mock severity.

"All I can think of is the girl I've got beside me," he retorted.

"Goodness, now I've got her on my hands," exclaimed Abbie in despair, not deigning to show she was mightily pleased with his speech.

"Poor little busy, kindly hands! Let them rest," said Ian Grant. "Look at Miss Molyneaux. She is the perfection of calm elegance. Try to look like her."

"I'm trying to behave, Mr. Grant," said Rosamond. "This is my first grown up party and I want to look as if it were my hundred and first."

"I should never have suspected it. You are succeeding far beyond your wildest hopes in that direction, Miss Molyneaux."

"Now that gives me courage, and I shall venture forth to talk to old Mrs. Macaulay, who is all alone over there with a book of views."

So laughing, she left them and walked down the long room to where the stately old lady sat in a corner.

Many glances followed her as she moved with natural grace down the room. Most of the guests

were gathered near the piano at the opposite end, but a few were seated here and there, and these she passed with a word or a smile. Her carriage was striking. She was distinguished-looking, rather than pretty, and there was more promise of beauty than its actual presence in her face and form.

Mrs. Macaulay welcomed her warmly and presently she had inveigled the old lady into a lengthy monologue over the book of views. For Mrs. Macaulay had traveled much in her young days, and dearly loved to recount her journeyings. Rosamond looked sympathetic, asked a few leading questions, and had only to listen to the exhaustive answers.

Once during the monologue Rosamond gave a comprehensive glance round the room and her eyes met those of Alan Craig. Mrs. Molyneaux had released him after having satisfied herself about him. She believed what he told her and he told her what pleased himself.

He rose and crossed the room to where Rosamond sat, and she smiled when he fell easily into Mrs. Macaulay's reminiscences, helping her out now and then with his own experiences, for he, too, had traveled. But it was not for that he had

come, and presently, when some passer-by stopped to speak to Mrs. Macaulay, he turned to Rosamond.

"Mr. Matheson has promised me a place in an office in town," he said, and his tone was confidential. "Ross is a brick. It was through him I got it, of course."

"Oh, I am glad. That will be more congenial work than farming."

"Strange, Miss Molyneaux, but it won't. I hate office work—and city life altogether."

"And you like farming?"

"Not farming for other people—but I'd like to farm on my own account. I hope to be able to do so some day. But this office work will keep me in town, and that's where I want to be—just now."

Rosamond laughed. "That sounds very inconsistent, Mr. Craig. I wish you would explain."

She met his glance with eyes full of innocent, girlish mirth.

"I dare not explain—now," he said. And Rosamond grew suddenly grave, inwardly wondering if she had asked an impertinent question, by no means connecting the cause of his stay in Cape Town with herself.

She had lived so long in her world of books and

dreams that she was much more childlike in her thoughts than most girls of her age. It was this very purity of soul shining out of her candid eyes that first attracted the somewhat world-battered man, who was twelve years her senior.

They had no further conversation alone, for presently Mrs. Molyneaux swept down upon them, and she kept Rosamond close to her for the rest of the evening.

Some days later Mr. Molyneaux went with Colin Ross and Mr. Matheson on a trip up-country. They intended to stay away a week, but the holiday extended over three weeks.

During that time, Alfred Ridgway made use of his opportunities to further his suit with Rosamond. He was well aware that her father did not regard him favorably and consequently he was very careful not to annoy her with his too-persistent attentions when her father was in the house. But now, knowing that he had every encouragement from Mrs. Molyneaux, he waylaid Rosamond at all hours of the day, so that her life became a misery through his vulgar attentions. She grew to dread as well as to loathe the man. He assumed a proprietary air, and Rosamond, helpless, beyond showing her intense contempt

and disgust, began to have doubts whether or not, between his persistence and her mother's coercion, she would not yet be forced to marry him. She shuddered at the thought. It followed her through the day and kept her awake at night.

She entreated her mother to interfere, but Mrs. Molyneaux rated her soundly, calling her behavior outrageous. She desired no better fate for her only child than to marry this leering, low-browed boor, whose sole recommendation in her eyes was his bank-account. Yet Mrs. Molyneaux was not so much to blame as might seem at first sight. She was incapable of realizing Rosamond's attitude of mind toward such a man. It was the tragedy of both their lives that, united in the closest bonds of human relationship, they should be forever as far apart as the poles, by characters diametrically opposed to each other.

Rosamond realized to the full what life would be for her when her father was gone from her forever, and she sent up an agonized cry to God to leave him to her for long years yet.

She met Alan Craig at Abbie's house on two or three occasions during her father's absence, and once being "down town" as the residents of the

Gardens of Cape Town call the business part of the city, she met him in Adderley Street during the office lunch hour. He asked permission to go a little way with her and as usual they talked of his prospects.

He was chafing under the restraint of the office desk. Of a restless nature, he was struggling against the old desire to shake off the trammels of respectability.

Rosamond had but a dim idea of his difficulties, but she strove to give him the sympathy he needed. Her knowledge of her father's weakness made her lenient with Craig, where another girl of her years would have been hard with the hardness of youth. He left her feeling better able to face his irksome work—more a man, and less a self-indulgent animal. But when Rosamond casually mentioned having met him, Mrs. Molyneaux's anger knew no bounds.

She raged and stormed until all the domestics listening below fled precipitately into a neighbor's yard. She raked Craig's character with a scorching fire of words, and accused Rosamond of meeting him clandestinely.

Rosamond listened, pale and silent, with tearless, agonized glance fixed on her mother's angry

face. Only the tense look of the firm mouth, the erect figure, the closely-clenched hands showed that the girl was exercising the utmost self-control on her own passionate nature.

When her mother paused, she said in a strange, hard voice, "You forget, mother, that the man you abuse without reason has saved my life."

"No, I don't forget it, and I'm not likely to forget it, seeing as you are always flinging the news at me. But gratitude is one thing, and encouraging a man who was cast off by his own people and can't earn a decent living or keep a decent place is another. You'll talk with him and walk with him forsooth, because he's got a good-looking face, and who knows how many women have been fooled in the same way, but you'll not be commonly civil to them as can hold up their heads with the rest in the town—an honest, respectable, hard-working man who could buy and sell a hundred such wasters as Craig. You'll have nothing more to do with him as long as you're under my roof."

"Very well. Will you write and tell him so?"

"I will do no such thing. Neither will you."

"Then how I am to let him know your orders?"

Rosamond spoke quite calmly. All her life had

been a training for this. Her mother's will was as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

"Oh, he will know quick enough. If it goes to that, the next time you meet him, just say I don't think him fit for you to speak to, and go on your way."

"And that is to be my return for his having risked his life to save mine?" She asked the question quietly, though her heart was full of bitterness and anger.

"Any man would have done the same in his place," said her mother, feeling more uncomfortable under the question than she showed. She turned with some relief to greet the entrance of Albert Ridgway.

He was a short, thick-set man whose age was difficult to decide: it might be anything between thirty and forty-five. He had a round bullet head, on which the thick black hair stood up straight and aggressively, a low forehead, deep-set black eyes, shifty and cruel-looking, and a sensual mouth but imperfectly concealed by a stubby black mustache. He was showily dressed and his whole bearing was one of self-assurance. His jaunty air said as plainly as possible, "I'm as good as you and a good deal better off."

In a certain set of his acquaintances he was regarded as a very eligible bachelor, and was the recipient of much attention in consequence, but he announced that he would wed a lady who would do credit to the establishment he intended to have when he married.

He rarely came to Rosamond empty-handed, and now he carried a huge bunch of freesias and violets, exquisite in themselves, but to Rosamond inexplicably vulgarized by his touch.

"Accept these, Miss Rosamond, from a humble admirer," he said, presenting them with a bow and a leer.

Rosamond, not daring to refuse them with her mother's eyes upon her, took them in silence, and put them on the table. Her eyes said quite plainly, "I loathe you—and your gifts."

CHAPTER XIII.

A PROMISE.

"But you know, my dear aunt, I really don't see the necessity for changing my state at all. I am a perfectly happy bachelor. It is my vocation." Justin Fortescue crossed his legs leisurely, and leaning back in his favorite chair before the fire, looked at Mrs. Craythorne with lazy, smiling eyes.

The seven years which had passed since he left the Cape had shaped the lad into a well-built, handsome man, distinguished looking, and certain to be picked out in any assembly as a typical English gentleman.

"Vocation! Nonsense!" Mrs. Craythorne's gentle voice rang as near impatience as she ever allowed it. She poured out her nephew's tea, and then continued. "It is the one wish of your grandfather's heart—and mine—to see you married."

Justin stirred his tea, smiling thoughtfully the while. Was it for this his Aunt Helen had sent

for him, saying she would not be at home to any one else that afternoon?

"Well now, aunt, don't you see it's no use trying to get me off?" He looked at her quizzically. "You have given me every chance. I've met the nicest girls going—small girls and tall girls—womanly girls and manly girls and—every variety of girl, and I'm still rejoicing in my single blessedness."

"You are a spoiled boy among them all," said his aunt, trying hard to look severe. "It was quite shocking to see the number of birthday presents you got from the very girls you deride."

"But that's just it, my dear aunt; I don't deride them. Not at all. I admire them every one. The difficulty is I can not wed them all."

Mrs. Craythorne laughed. Her lectures to Justin generally ended that way. She was a widow and childless, and Justin got all the love which would have been given to her own son, had one been born to her.

"You are perfectly incorrigible," she said.

"Well, when I meet a woman as nice and lovely and lovable and good and—home-like—as my Aunt Helen, by Jove, I'll marry her without a murmur. There now! That's a promise."

And Mrs. Craythorne's still handsome face broke into irresistible smiles again. She had not outgrown her appreciation of a pretty speech. What woman ever does?

Presently, Justin after a moment's hesitation spoke again.

"I wanted to tell you about a couple of letters I had from the Cape," he said, somewhat gravely.

Mrs. Craythorne lifted her head suddenly, and there was a curious look on her face.

"From Eustace Molyneaux?" she said quietly.

"One from him and one from my little ward."

"Your little ward must be seventeen now; rather a big ward."

"But a mere child still, and much younger than her years in ways. And yet she must be growing womanly—little Bride—because already her admirers are causing her trouble, and I am her court of appeal."

"I should think she ought to have advisers sufficiently wise in her parents."

"Her parents, Aunt Helen! Do you forget what I told you about them? Her mother—well the less said about her the better."

"I wonder how Eustace Molyneaux ever came to marry such a woman," said Mrs. Craythorne.

"And the wonder is greater because he was one of your devoted slaves in his youth, was he not?"

Mrs. Craythorne looked into the fire dreamily. She was back in the past where Eustace Molyneaux, young, handsome, clever, with a brilliant future before him, was the most notable figure in her own world. She had learned too late that she cared for him. He had taken her refusal as she might have expected he would take it—leaving England forever—leaving his career, his home, his friends to bury himself in Africa.

"He was," she said at length, smiling wistfully at the fire. The years had left but a little sentimental regret, for she had been a happy wife to Harold Craythorne. But the fair "might have been" was still fair, and the very fact of Eustace Molyneaux's woeful marriage kept her pity keen.

"Funny old world, is it not, Aunt Helen? There's that little girl, with all the instincts and feelings of a refined and cultured woman, set down in the midst of lower middle class poverty and ignorance, where the jangle and jar of life hurt her at every turn, just because she is more finely made than her surroundings."

"Has the girl nothing in common with her mother?"

"Absolutely nothing. That is the misery of it—for her—though she scarcely understands yet why life is so difficult for her. One can not put it into plain words to her. After all, the woman is her mother and Rosamond has a very keen sense of duty; she gives her her due of love and honor and all that—quite in the good, old-fashioned way."

He smiled a little whimsically.

"When I read her letters, I often wish I could take her entirely away from her home and let her know what this jolly old world is like, with such women as you to bless it. I wish I could interest you in the child, Aunt Helen."

Mrs. Craythorne met his beseeching glance. "I am interested in her—a great deal interested in her," she said. "Her father's daughter, even under less pitiful circumstances, would win my interest. But—well—I rather dread the mother."

"Mrs. Molyneaux is not a bad sort, really. She is a good-natured woman, whose only fault is that she lives on a plane very far below her own child—and that is not her fault, either. What makes me more than usually anxious about Bride is that her father's health has been breaking up for some time past, and in every letter I fear

to learn of the end. What will become of Bride when the end does come is what puzzles me."

"Strange, we should drift into this conversation," said Mrs. Craythorne. "I sent for you to-day to tell you that the doctors have ordered me to the Cape for this winter. They think the—how do you say?—the Karoo will settle this lung trouble that is the result of the last influenza attack."

"You are going to the Cape? I wish, I could go with you. Yes, the fine dry air of the Karoo will certainly give you a new lease of life."

"And, of course, I should see Eustace Molyneux and his—family."

"And you will be good to little Bride?"

Mrs. Craythorne laughed a little.

"I'll make a bargain with you, Justin." Her delicate jewelled fingers moved a little nervously among the ribbons of her teagown.

"There is Alex," she said: "I will be as good as she will permit me to your little ward, if you will be good to Alex while I am away."

"Be good to Miss Carberry? Am I not always good to her? We are the best of friends."

Justin, too, looked for the first time in the conversation, a little nervous.

Alex Carberry, the daughter of his grandfather's old friend, Colonel Carberry, was, he knew, the wife both his aunt and grandfather had selected for him. Neither had as yet broached the subject to him, but it was tacitly understood that he would at some time in the not very distant future marry Alex Carberry.

Alex herself knew this also, but being very matter-of-fact and practical-minded, with innumerable interests beyond the mere fashionable routine of the social set she moved in, calmly told her father she had no time, yet, to think of getting married. Being an only child and a somewhat self-willed one, she followed her own bent quite freely. She took intense and practical interest in the poor of the East End of London, and cared little for the pleasure of a London season.

Justin and she were, as he said, the best of friends. They appreciated each other in a friendly way, and their elders hoped that their cherished plan for them would yet be accomplished.

Mrs. Craythorne rose from the low chair she had occupied since Justin's entrance, and going over behind him leaned on his chair and touched his hair gently with caressing fingers.

"My dear boy, I wish you would," she said pleadingly, and paused half-timidly, for Justin was no mere tool in her hands—however loving the hands might be.

"She is very pretty, is she not?" she said, after a pause during which Justin smiled up at her with a challenge in his eyes.

"She is," he assented heartily.

"She is good?" went on Aunt Helen.

"Without a doubt."

"And lovable?"

"I love her—like a brother!"

"Oh, you teasing boy! She is an excellent housekeeper?"

"Most charming of aunts—I will take your word for that."

"And she will make an excellent wife?"

"Probably."

"And she is *persona grata* with Sir Humphrey?"

"Oh, she is!"

"And I love her."

"Lucky Miss Carberry!"

"And she has taken such interest in your career, even since you left college."

"Do you not think she would have taken still

more interest if I had happened to be a coster in the other end?"

"You dreadful boy! You *do* like her, I know!"

"Of course I do! I admire Miss Carberry immensely—with two or three and twenty other fair maidens of your acquaintance and mine."

"You are—but no! I believe you are just teasing me. You *know* how I would love to have her for a niece, and I can not think you will so far disappoint your grandfather and me as to do anything else."

Justin stood up, looking somewhat grave.

"I'm afraid neither Miss Carberry nor I am anxious to wed—certainly I am selfish enough to wish to keep my freedom yet a while, and if I mistake not, Miss Carberry is far too busy to think of such frivolities as courtship and marriage."

"Well, but promise me you will be nice to her while I am away. You will go to her often in the afternoons. She will make your tea as you like and—"

"Will she be an aunt to me?" asked Justin, his whole face alight with amusement at her transparent efforts at diplomacy.

"Ridiculous boy! But promise me you will think over what I have said, and that you will not neglect her while I am at the Cape."

"I promise faithfully," said Justin, still with twinkling eyes. "But I wish I could go to the Cape with you. The grandad would not hear of it, though. He will send for me again probably to-morrow or next day. There's a lovely uncertainty about the old man's whims."

"But because he is an old man and you may not have him long, you will humor him? I would dearly love to have you come with me. I have Barton, of course, and she is invaluable when one is traveling, but of course I'd far rather have you. Only as you say, Sir Humphrey wouldn't hear of it just now."

"No—worse luck! You leave soon?"

"I hope to get away in about a fortnight's time. Will it be frightfully dull on that Karoo?"

"Not so bad. The life, of course, will be totally different to this—" Justin indicated the perfectly appointed room and its fashionably gowned owner. "But I fancy you will enjoy the experience, if only for the novelty of it. I hope it may send you back to us with renewed strength and

vigor. We can not have our only precious aunt a greater invalid than she is."

Mrs. Craythorne patted his arm fondly. "I shall bring many pretty things to the little Molyneaux," she said.

"That is like you. I know if you give her a fair chance, you will be fond of her, and I should not be surprised if you brought her back to England with you on a visit."

Mrs. Craythorne looked doubtful.

"We shall see," she said. Then as Justin took his hat prior to leaving her, "you will come to me every day until I go?"

"That is a matter of course."

CHAPTER XIV.

"PLAY THE MAN."

It was such a day as comes in early spring at the Cape, with skies lacking, it is true, the deep azure of summer, yet boasting a soft blue, cloudless and clear. Out on the Victoria Road with the sea far below, and the cliffs behind, Colin Ross and Alan Craig were going at a leisurely pace toward Camps Bay.

They were so deeply engrossed in conversation that the famous road and its scenery got but scanty attention, though they had set out with the avowed intention of seeing its beauties.

"I wish I could persuade you to come home with me next week, Alan. How shall I face Janet if you don't?"

Alan Craig looked deeply depressed. His face, prematurely lined, looked thin and worn. His shoulders were stooped and his whole appearance dejected.

"Home!" he laughed bitterly. "They'd kick

me out before I'd been a week there, and be sorry I ever turned up again to trouble them. Janet's the only one that cares."

"Then come—for her sake," said Colin, "and mine. Our home will be yours."

"Thanks, old man, but—well—you would soon tire of the philanthropy of it. No, I'm here now, and here I'll stay."

"In Cape Town?"

"No, I hate the place. I'll go up country."

"What's wrong, Alan? There's something up." Colin looked at him keenly.

"Yes, there's something up."

"What is it—money?"

Alan jingled his pockets.

"I have a month's salary here," he said.

"What then? A woman?"

"Scarcely that. A girl."

"Miss Molyneaux?"

Alan nodded and walked on in silence for some minutes. Then he laughed harshly.

"Funny thing, isn't it, that a fellow like me should want a girl like her? I scarcely knew it had happened till it did, up there at Malherbe's farm. I had to come down here to try my luck with her. I'm not exactly a church window

figure in the scheme of creation, but I'd get as near it as I could for that girl."

Again silence fell. Colin was not very much surprised, but he felt there was more to follow.

"Her mother has got an inkling of it, and has forbidden her to speak to me. She told me that when I met her down in the city yesterday. She'd hardly stay to answer me. Then I got mad, and blurted out the whole thing. She hadn't an idea of it until then, and—"

He stopped again; still Colin said nothing. Below them lay the sea, smooth as glass and deeply blue; the long, winding road cut out of the face of the mountain was deserted, and its very quietness made the surging passion of the man walking beside him seem stronger by contrast.

"I'll clear out of this place to-morrow," said Alan, at length, and there was desperation in his voice.

"Why give in?" came in Colin's quiet tones. "Fight for her like a man."

"There isn't any use. She—" again the voice broke hoarsely.

"Miss Molyneaux is only a girl. Probably you are the first man who has proposed to her. She does not know her own mind yet. You startled her yesterday. Bide a wee—and try again."

Colin's voice acted as he meant it to do. The cool, deliberate tones, the calm reasoning of an outsider whom he trusted, gave Alan courage.

"There's the mother, though," he said, "and her father too, for the matter of that."

"You haven't spoken to him?"

"I'm not such a fool. My only chance was to lie low until I had some sort of charter. God knows how I loathe office work, but I'd stick at it if I thought she'd let me make a home for her. But even *she* is against me now."

"Bide a wee," said Colin.

"I'm not fit to black her boots," said Alan.

"Well, say so, if it gives you any comfort. But play the man, and she'll respect you all the more for it."

Colin felt that this was the turning-point in a life hitherto misspent. His own friendship for Alan, together with the fact that his future wife was Alan's sister, made him desire keenly that this episode might lead to his final reformation. In his affection for a girl, pure, noble, strong, lay his salvation. So, though inwardly doubtful of the successful issue of his suit, Colin gave him what encouragement he could.

"You think I have a chance?" asked Alan.

"As good as any other man."

"I did think of trying to get a farm up-country—say on the Great Karoo—but you don't know the country, of course. I forgot that. Anyhow I've an idea I could manage a farm better than a Dutchman—if I could get capital to start with. There's no chance of bettering one's self in Cape Town. I would probably stick at my present pay for the next ten years."

"But it's a sure thing, and the farm is problematical," suggested Colin.

"Oh, I'll keep this place until something better turns up, unless—" he broke off significantly. All depended on Rosamond Molyneaux, of course. Colin understood, but he considered it safer to leave the subject, and he led Alan to speak of his up-country experiences, and this occupied them until, turning back, they caught the tram, and rode into Cape Town.

Meanwhile the episode described by Alan Craig, was causing both Rosamond and her father considerable disturbance of mind. Mr. Molyneaux, whose health was in a very precarious state, was thrown into a condition of excitement, and Rosamond was deeply distressed. She had told her father of what had occurred, fearing

to mention Alan's name again to her mother, and hoping for direction and advice. But instead, her father became as angry as her mother had done, though the anger was directed at Alan, not at herself. That a man of his character should presume to address his daughter in such terms made Eustace Molyneaux's blood boil.

It did not matter to him that Alan had reformed and was possessed of a settled income, however small. Nor did it occur to him that Alan was like himself in his fatal propensities—Alan was an outcast from his own people, a ne'er-do-well with no character and less position, and it was clear presumption for him to aspire to the hand of a Molyneaux.

Rosamond had much difficulty in calming her father, and was almost sorry she had spoken of the matter at all. During the seventeen years of her life she had had to decide for herself in all important matters, and it spoke well for her judgment that there lay no act of rashness or folly such as might be even condoned on the score of youth—in her past. Her mother was content with exercising her authority in the petty details of daily life, but when any momentous question

required settling she relied on the girl's own judgment—with the one exception of Alfred Ridgway—a very big exception. On this matter Rosamond had also spoken to her father, and this, coupled with her interview with Alan Craig, made him decide to send Rosamond to England.

"I wish I had sent you years ago, mavourneen," he said, "but you were the only bright gift in my life and I couldn't part with you."

"And how can you part with me now?" asked Rosamond, who did not want to go to England without him.

"I haven't much time here—and it would be cruel to leave you here behind me."

"And you will send me away thousands of miles—and you as ill as you are, and no one to understand you as I do? What do I care for these little worries? They will pass. Ridgway we can put out of the house, and I can manage Alan Craig myself."

"But think, mavourneen, your grand-aunt, Mrs. Delaney, would be glad to have you with her. She has often asked me to send you to her, but I couldn't let you go. You would be happy with her, and you would be freed from these undesirables. "

"And do you really believe, daddy dear, I could be happy away from you, in your present state of health? I should be utterly wretched knowing—" she broke off and hid her face on his shoulder.

"Don't send me," she pleaded, lifting up her tear-wet face imploringly. "These worries will pass—and—we have each other."

His arms closed round her and he could not speak for some minutes.

"You make me selfish, mavourneen," he said presently. "It would break my heart to let you go—but it is the right thing to do. You ought to go."

"Not while you are so ill. It would be cruel to us both. Put it out of your head, daddy dear. I'd rather face fifty Ridgways than the ship that would take me to England now."

So Rosamond had her way.

But this matter weighed heavily on her father's mind, and though he did not speak of it again to Rosamond, yet he spoke at some length and with unusual force to his wife.

And it was in vain that she held forth on the Ridgway bank-book and the virtue of three shops and an establishment in the future. Mr. Molyneaux was more emphatic than he had ever been

in his life, and stated that if the man was not sent out of the house and if his obnoxious attentions did not cease, he would send Rosamond to his English relations.

"She will have whatever little income Murray Campbell left her when she is eighteen, and so when I am under the sod she will not be a burden, but a help to you. Our daughter will not marry a boor such as Ridgway is, nor a good-for-nothing fellow such as Craig, but when she marries, you can depend that her choice will be suitable. She has no mean share of intellect, and has the saving grace of common sense. It is my earnest wish, that when I am gone, Rosamond should go to England."

"Oh, of course, you want her to go to England. And what's to become of me? I'm not good enough for your fine English relations, what haven't done a thing for you these twenty years, and I've slaved and worked to keep a home decent for you."

"You have always been a good wife," said Molyneaux, with unexpected gentleness. "I do not mean that you are to stay here and let Rosamond go alone to England. Of course you are to go with her, but I don't think, Laura, you'd

be quite happy among the English. But that is as you please. Only one thing, I state—as, I may almost say, my last wish—that Rosamond goes to her own people, or to Justin Fortescue's people. He will be her guardian—when my time comes."

"You aren't feeling worse?" asked Mrs. Molyneaux, with some anxiety.

"Not worse, nor better. I may go off at any minute—or I may be here for years. It's pretty uncertain, anyhow. I've not been the best of husbands and—"

"There! Don't say another word, or I declare I'll cry. You're not so bad—as husbands go—except for the extra drop now and then. And you were always quiet in your cups, not like some that I know. You've kept from it pretty well lately—since you went to the Sacraments. But why don't you give up going to that office? I'm earning enough for us both now, and you're not fit to be going there! Think if anything happened to you down there. Who would look after you?"

Mr. Molyneaux shook his head.

"The office is too much a part of me to give it up, now—until I must," he said.

"I suppose it has grown into a habit after all the

years," Mrs. Molyneaux said, with more affection than usual, and she added after a slight pause. "Don't you worry about Ridgway. I'll settle him. He will leave Rosamond alone when I've spoken to him."

"Very well. And you'll remember—if anything should happen to me—that I wish the child to go to Justin Fortescue's people or mine, at least for a couple of years. It is just as well to settle the matter now, once and for all."

"Yes, that's settled. But nothing is going to happen to you. Why do you keep on saying that?"

"Do you believe in presentiments? I do."

His wife looked at him, uncertain of his meaning, but he laughed a little and taking his gladstone bag and his hat, went out into the hall. This conversation took place one morning after breakfast, and Mr. Molyneaux was going as usual down to the city. Rosamond came downstairs ready to accompany him, as she had some small commissions to fulfil for her mother.

Very fair and fresh and sweet she looked in her pale blue cotton gown and white sailor hat, her eyes shining with the joy of youth and life, her dark waving hair caught back into a blue ribbon and then falling loosely to her waist.

"Come, mavourneen," said her father, eyeing her proudly, and together they turned at the gate to bid farewell to Mrs. Molyneaux.

Rosamond remembered with strange vividness every detail of that morning walk—how they had laughed and talked gaily in that spirit of *camaraderie* which made their intercourse so precious, how, when Rosamond reached the store she wanted, she waited on the veranda to watch her father out of sight and how he had raised his hat in farewell as he turned the corner into the next street.

She remembered it with anguished vividness all her life—for a few hours later her father was found dead in his office with Mrs. Craythorne's letter on his desk before him.

CHAPTER XV.

DARK DAYS.

So Rosamond received her first great sorrow. Her life had been so bound up in her father's, they had been such inseparable companions from her babyhood, that her world seemed to totter round her when he was taken away.

A merciful unconsciousness followed the falling of the blow. She lay as one dead. Mrs. Molyneaux, looking at her, thought that death had robbed her of husband and child at one fell swoop. For weeks Rosamond lay between life and death, but slowly and painfully she crept back to consciousness, and faced life again.

During her illness her mother nursed her night and day; tender, patient, unselfish, unwearied, she lavished every care on her daughter. Mrs. Molyneaux was at her best in the sick room. All the asperities of her character were softened by the presence of suffering; she had the born nurse's gentle, methodical ways, and added to that the undoubted affection of a mother.

Rosamond, lying weak and frail on her pillows, watched her mother with something akin to wonder. There were depths of love undreamt of made known to her during those painful days and sleepless nights—depths of which she had judged her mother incapable. And her own love stirred warmly under the revelation. They caught hands across the barriers which had divided them, and came nearer to understanding each other than ever before.

But Rosamond, with all youth's abandonment to a first grief, had little desire to live. She tried to realize what life would be like without her father—and failed. He had been her friend, her confidant, her teacher, as well as her father. She had desired or sought no other friend, had needed no other companion. Even Abbie Matheson, who was a constant visitor while Rosamond was ill, failed to comfort her, though her bright face and cheery ways brought sunshine to the sick room. No one could fill the vacant place. His failings were forgotten. They were so human after all. Memory traveled back over the years she could remember, and the tears flowed fast as one by one his lovable traits came before her.

And he had been taken so suddenly from her!

Was it possible he was lying, silent and cold, out there in Maitland cemetery? That she should not see him when she got up? Oh, surely he would come into the room presently and laugh away her horrid dream?

Then would come the question that she had asked so often since the day when the dreadful darkness had fallen upon her.

"Mother is he really—dead? Did you see him—dead? I can not believe it. He looked so well that day, and we were so merry going down the street. Do you remember? Oh, mother, he can not be dead!"

Rosamond had not seen her father's corpse, for she had lain unconscious, and waked only in the delirium of fever. Her father's remains had been carried out for burial, and she had not known. So it was well-nigh impossible to convince her he was really dead.

Her mother as gently as might be told her all the details when she was strong enough to bear them.

"It is strange, but that morning he seemed to feel that something was going to happen. 'These are my last words,' he says to me. 'If anything happens to me, you'll know my wishes.'

‘Why,’ I says, ‘are you feeling worse, then?’ For he looked, as you say, child, quite well and happy. ‘Not worse, nor better,’ he says, ‘but the end may come any hour.’ And the end did come that day.”

Mrs. Molyneaux’s eyes filled with tears. “And the letter he was reading was from Justin Fortescue’s aunt, telling him she was coming to the Cape and would call to see us. There wasn’t anything in the letter to trouble him, but the doctors say he died of shock.”

Rosamond guessed what her mother failed to understand, for her father had told her of his early disappointment in life and she knew that in his state of health the slight shock occasioned by Mrs. Craythorne’s letter was enough to kill him.

“She’ll be here this week,” continued her mother, and then launched out into a description of all she was having done to the house to prepare it for her fashionable visitor. All this seemed as a distraction for Mrs. Molyneaux now that Rosamond was convalescent. But Rosamond wearied of the subject. Her grief was too new, the break in her life too great, for her to take up daily interests with any avidity.

She regarded Mrs. Craythorne’s coming with

mixed feelings. At first she felt resentful toward the woman who, not content with spoiling her father's life, had, even though involuntarily, hastened his death. But then this same woman was her friend's aunt—the woman whom he regarded with the utmost affection and admiration, and whom he was constantly holding up for her veneration as a model of all that was lovely and lovable in her sex—indirectly, of course, for Justin's letters never "preached."

Rosamond felt a little thrill of curiosity concerning this Aunt Helen whom she knew so well through Justin, and through her father, and when the day came on which she was expected Rosamond declared herself, in spite of the doctor, well enough to go downstairs.

Very frail and sad she looked in her black gown. She had gathered up the heavy dark hair into a loose knot in her neck, for, as she said with a little wistful smile, she had left childhood behind her now, and must face life as a woman. Her dress was longer than she had worn before her illness, and she looked taller in consequence.

The day was a bright sunny one in September and Rosamond stood for some time looking out at two scraggy oaks in the diminutive garden. They

were making a gallant attempt to imitate their country sisters by donning fresh green robes and they succeeded in giving a spring-like air to the street. Overhead the sky was softly blue, and the mountain rose clearly defined against it, every kloof and almost every rock vividly seen in the translucent air.

But through all, at every turn, Rosamond was reminded of her loss. Here were his favorite books, there the chair he sat in, this his well-used paper knife, that his pipe-rack. Rosamond in her chair near the window, had but to close her eyes, and he was there, smiling at her.

But to-day her grief was too deep for tears. She touched everything belonging to him as if it were in sympathy with her loss, and held comfort for her lonely heart. She had not yet faced the problem of the future. She was living in the past—memories bitter-sweet surged through her brain.

And so it happened that when Mrs. Craythorne was ushered into the little sitting-room which Rosamond occupied, she found a girl with dreamy, blue-gray eyes, a pensive manner, and yet with an unconscious air of distinction in her speech and bearing that somewhat surprised her.

Mrs. Craythorne scarcely knew what she had expected to find, but she was not at all surprised at Mrs. Molyneaux's shaky grammar and unpolished manner, while she was astonished to find Rosamond what she was.

"You are—'mavourneen?'"

The voice was very sweet, the manner very gracious, as the daintily-dressed woman of the world came forward to Rosamond.

The girl had risen when her mother and the visitor entered, but a sudden trembling seized her, and she held fast by the chair, unable to advance to meet them.

The name—her father's pet name—brought a rush of tearless grief to her heart, and she stood there trying to smile into Mrs. Craythorne's face, when her soul was wrung with anguish.

"Nay, do not move, I beg. You have been ill. Your mother has told me." Two gentle hands took hers, and the handsome face was raised to hers, before Rosamond could frame an answer.

"Will you kiss me?" said the musical voice, and Rosamond, being taller, bent and kissed her.

"You—you are very welcome, Mrs. Craythorne," she said. "Please forgive my discour-

easy, but something—I scarcely know what—made me tremble when you entered.”

The simple words simply spoken pleased the somewhat fastidious aunt of Justin Fortescue.

“I quite understand.” Rosamond was gently pushed into her chair, and Mrs. Craythorne took one close to it. “You are getting strong again? I am glad—so glad—but you have yet to be very careful,” continued Mrs. Craythorne.

“To-day she is down for the first time,” said Mrs. Molyneaux, whose awe of the visitor was plain to be seen, despite her efforts to conceal it. “She would come down, she said, to meet Justin’s aunt.”

“But you have done nothing rash in coming down? May I call you mavourneen? Somehow the name seems to suit you, and it is so quaint.”

“It is very dear to me,” said Rosamond, with a little quivering smile, just bordering on tears. “It was my father’s name for me. And I should like you to use it. No one called me that but he.”

“And I may? That is very dear of you, mavourneen. Can you bear to speak of your darling father? I can realize how keen a grief you have suffered in losing him. We were friends

—he and I—in our young days, and he was a friend in the real sense of the word.”

“I know you were friends,” Rosamond said, speaking with some difficulty.

“And this visit to the Cape was, I hoped, to renew our friendship. You can imagine, then, what a shock I received on learning of his sudden death. But he had more or less expected the sudden call, I understand, and was well prepared.”

“He seemed to know something was going to happen to him that day,” said Mrs. Molyneaux, and then she gave a detailed account of his last morning at home. Rosamond, to whom the recital was anguish, listened with great self-control, vaguely wondering the while why she could not take the same comfort her mother evidently found in going over the harrowing details at full length to every one who came to the house.

Presently, with infinite tact, Mrs. Craythorne led the conversation to her own travels and suggested that Rosamond should accompany her when she went up-country. She was moved thereto by a mixture of feelings that surprised herself—but uppermost was a strong attraction to Rosamond.

Whether it was the girl’s marked resemblance to her father, or the pity roused by hearing her

mother talk, or the sorrow in Rosamond's tearless eyes, she could not have said, but she was drawn strongly to her.

And Rosamond found in Mrs. Craythorne her friend's ideal justified. The sweetness and graciousness and polished ease of her manner, the air of refinement, the tact and gentleness she displayed, appealed to all that was best in the girl.

Mrs. Molyneaux, dimly conscious that this was so, felt she had some cause for resentment. Yet she consented pleasantly enough to allow Rosamond to accompany Mrs. Craythorne in a fortnight's time to the Karoo. It would not be easy to refuse this gracious English lady, whose bearing while being very gentle yet suggested authority not to be questioned.

CHAPTER XVI.

GINA 'TORIA.

"MAVOURNEEN, look what a quaint, small child—ebony in color, and such eyes!" exclaimed Mrs. Craythorne ecstatically, and Rosamond, turning her gaze from the sea, looked at the little dark girl who was sitting on the wayside.

Mrs. Craythorne had taken Rosamond for a drive to St. James, and they had left the carriage and were walking along the road to Muizenberg. There is only one road, and it lies between the mountains and the sea, and they were the only foot-travelers on it.

Sauntering leisurely along, enjoying the sunshine and the sea-air, the two quasi-invalids had fallen into that happy silence, which between friends is golden. Their friendship had made rapid progress since the morning eight days before when Mrs. Craythorne had entered for the first time the sitting room in Dunstable Street. Every day they had spent some hours together, and

every day brought them nearer to each other in sympathy of thought.

From Rosamond Mrs. Craythorne received that pleasant blending of girlish homage and womanly sympathy which her simple life on the one hand, and her mature judgment on the other, enabled her to give.

And Rosamond found in her new friend the first woman who had entered fully into her thoughts and aspirations.

So it was not altogether condescension from the elder or gratitude from the younger woman which accounted for their growing intimacy. Despite the disparity of years each found in the other much that answered to her need.

Rosamond, to whom the sea was a passionate delight always, withdrew her reluctant gaze from the white breakers crashing over the rocks below on the beach, and looked at the small unkempt morsel of black humanity which had caught Mrs. Craythorne's fancy.

She smiled a little. "There are scores—nay hundreds like her about here," she said.

"I doubt it," rejoined Mrs. Craythorne, "not with such eyes, and such a smooth, brown skin. What is your name, little girl?"

The child sat looking at her with unwinking black eyes.

"She does not understand. I will ask her in Dutch," said Rosamond.

"Oh, do you understand Dutch?"

"Just the folk-dialect of the country," said Rosamond and addressed the child.

"Gina," said the elf, promptly. She seemed to be about eight years old, and she was clad in a ragged cotton frock, and wore a pink handkerchief over her head.

By questioning, they discovered that Gina lived in a hut on the mountain side with her grandmother, who kept house for her uncle. Her own parents were "gone" she did not know where. Gina did not know of any parents except her grandmother, who beat her a great deal.

"How cruel!" exclaimed Mrs. Craythorne. "I'd dearly love to have her for my little maid. Let us go up and interview the grandmother. Are you able to walk up there?"

"Certainly, if you are able. The hut is behind that big rock, Gina says. But—" Rosamond smiled again, "you are very brave to undertake the care of this small barbarian."

"Why? She would be such a curiosity at home.

Much more so than a black 'Jeames.' Think how picturesque this mite would look in a white dress and scarlet kerchief arranged like a turban."

"Picturesque, certainly," assented Rosamond, but there was doubt and amusement and some discouragement in her voice.

"I would have her trained as a maid, of course, and given a good education," continued Mrs. Craythorne. "Why do you look so dubious?"

Rosamond smiled frankly. "I have seen the educated and trained colored girl. She is not a success—as a domestic. She copies her mistress in dress, pilfers everything indiscriminately, reads your letters when possible, is a stranger to truth, and is both lazy and dirty."

Mrs. Craythorne held up her hands in laughing protest.

"Oh, surely too sweeping a condemnation!" she said. "At all events I am willing to risk all that with the small Gina. What a queer name, by the way!"

"It is probably Regina. They are fond of high sounding names—these colored people." Rosamond turned to the child and asked her second name.

"Toria," she answered, and there was a look

of selfish cunning in the small face, as if she quite understood all she heard.

"Victoria?" asked Rosamond.

"Yah, missis."

"Regina Victoria," laughed Mrs. Craythorne. "Will your majesty lead us to your royal residence? Translate, mavourneen. I must have Gina 'Toria at all costs."

So they followed the child up the steep hill overlooking the wood, and after a short climb came upon a low-sized hut of primitive construction and questionable cleanliness, with its back to a huge boulder in the hillside, and its face to the sea. On nearing the hut, Gina sent up her treble cry in Dutch, and presently an old colored woman came out. She was vigorous-looking, despite a very furrowed face and the scraps of gray-white wool that escaped from her head kerchief.

"Good afternoon, missis," she said in English.

Mrs. Craythorne returned her greeting and at once began to question her about the child, without, however, making known her desire to have her. The grandmother was garrulous. Gina was her daughter's child. Her daughter was dead; all her children were dead except Nelus and he was a cripple and not able to do a man's work. They

were very poor, she said. In the season they gathered mountain flowers and sold them, and at other times she took in washing. It was hard on her to have to support Gina—such a child as she was too—like a rock rabbit, more than an ordinary child. The child's father? A shrug of the shoulders and a spreading out of her hands, Gina's mother had known, and she was dead. Could Gina go live by the lady? Oh, but the lady was good. Of course Gina could go, but the missus must beat her plenty. She could work yes, wash, and scrub—a little, but the missus must beat her plenty.

The lady wanted to take Gina to England? Well, it was good so, if the lady would pay her for Gina. The lady must know when Gina grew up she would work for her grandmother, and if the lady took Gina—

“Had you not better make the matter a legal one?” suggested Rosamond.

“A good ideal” assented Mrs. Craythorne and she gave the old woman money to bring herself and the child to Cape Town on the following day, telling her the name of her hotel.

They wended their way to the road again,

carrying with them a bunch of Cape heath done up in a stiff bouquet.

"What a glorious view!" exclaimed Rosamond, pausing on the slope of the hill.

"Splendid. That is Simon's Town to our right, is it not? Look at the opalescent tints of the sky over those mountains," rejoined Mrs. Craythorne. "This would be a fine site for a villa. That old dame is monarch of all she surveys up there, and probably does not realize the wealth of loveliness that meets her gaze every time she stands at her door."

"Not she," laughed Rosamond. "She hasn't a soul above robbing the mountain of its flowers and producing such monstrosities as that!" and she held out the bouquet.

The carriage was waiting for them below on the road, and they entered and were driven swiftly off to Cape Town. On the way back Mrs. Craythorne and Rosamond discussed their plans for the future.

"Of course you will spend the next English summer with me, mavourneen? It was your father's last wish that you should go to England, and if possible to Justin's people. Well, I am 'Justin's people.'"

"How good you are to me!" Rosamond said, with shining eyes. "I know it was my father's wish that I should go to you, if I went to England at all. He so often spoke of sending me, but we could not bear to leave each other—and now—"

"You miss him much? I can understand no one can quite fill his place."

There fell a silence for a few minutes. Rosamond was feeling her loss more and more keenly as the days went by. Her mother was kind and unusually gentle; Mrs. Craythorne's friendship was very precious; but her loss was keener to-day than it was when the news of it first came to her. She realized gratefully how every one strove to comfort her. Abbie, the tender-hearted, was often with her friend during these days of mourning, striving by every loving wile to keep her from brooding over her grief. Even Ridgway had removed his obnoxious presence temporarily from the household, betaking himself up-country on business.

Alan Craig had written to her, and his letter touched her inexplicably. Her mother, too, was evidently moved by it. Its rough simplicity and manliness appealed to her. And then he said no

word of his own hopes—that was perhaps its best recommendation.

“You will answer that letter, of course, Rosamond,” she said, “and since Mr. Craig seems to have learned he need hope for no more than to be friends with you, I don’t see why you need cut him any more. I was afraid the bit of romance—his saving your life, and his having come down in the world and all that—might help to make him a bit interesting to you. But you have more sense than to throw yourself away on the likes of him, I hope.”

“I thought—and still think, I can help him to keep on the upward grade,” returned Rosamond thoughtfully. “But I could never marry him.”

“Then that’s all right. Be as nice to him as you like, if it helps him on. A woman ought to do all she can in the way of keeping men straight. There was your poor father—God rest him—where would he have been only for me, who kept him pretty straight. Give Mr. Craig a help over the stile if you can, but be quite sure he understands what you mean. Don’t let him run away with the idear you’re going to marry him when he’s got enough to marry on.”

The reference to her father grated on the girl;

and her mother's pronunciation of "idear," though it is a very common error in Colonials, made her wonder why her mother never learned to express herself in correct English.

But she put these thoughts aside as unworthy. Her habitual attitude toward life came to her rescue now as it had often done before. She had been born with the blessed disposition that does not ask too much of life. Her joys were found in simple things, and mostly in the world of books. All her dreams, her high thoughts, her ambitions, she realized clearly, must not lead her into the mistake of supposing that life would ever be very much richer in opportunities for their fulfillment than the present. Her daily routine of life might seem sordid and mean, but it was the material given her to shape into noble issues. The home she lived in, the people she mixed with, her daily work, temptations, trials, the darkness and weariness, the light and rest—these formed the metal she must transmute into the coin of Eternity.

Dowered as she was with a penetration beyond her years, she saw too clearly for her peace what a very varied quantity there was of human nature around her. Hers was not a temperament in

which affection, however strong, could blind her to the weakness, or still more to the defects of those she loved.

And there was in her the intolerance of youth that made it hard to bear the tearing away of the veil in which the wisest of us drape our divinities—that piercing of the glamour by the keen intuitive power of a soul at once alive to the attraction of human affection and the defalcation of the object beloved.

She turned to her mother now with more warmth in her manner than usual, as if to atone for her unspoken judgment.

“Are you sure you can let me go with Mrs. Craythorne, mother? You won’t be lonely?”

“Lonely! Bless your heart, child, there won’t be time to be lonely. I’ll have plenty of work with them boarders. They’ll have to keep me now. You will have your income from what Murray Campbell left you. ’Tisn’t much, but it will keep you in England where living is cheaper than here.”

“Oh, yes it will be enough,” returned Rosamond. Somehow she had expected a word of regret at her departure—had hoped her mother

would miss her, and it was with no small disappointment she turned away to write her letters. She felt she should miss her home and her mother more than they would miss her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THREE LETTERS.

I.

FROM MRS. CRAYTHORNE TO JUSTIN FORTESCUE.

Vanburensdorp,

12th October.

MY VERY DEAR JUSTIN:

The diary sent some weeks ago will have given you some idea of my first impressions concerning things Colonial—including your charming ward, for whom my affection has deepened with every day of our acquaintance.

It is quite refreshing to meet a girl so unspoiled by the world, so cultured in mind, so keen in intellect (she has her father's brains), and so refined and graceful in speech and bearing. Most of the younger people one meets are hopelessly frivolous or equally hopeless blue-stockings. Rosamond strikes the happy medium, quite naturally and unconsciously.

Well, now I must not rhapsodize too long over Rosamond.

As you will see by the heading of this letter we have reached our Mecca, and although the place is deadly dull, I feel ever so bright and well—better both in health and spirits.

The air is so bracing one rarely feels fatigued, and always hungry.

If it were not for the doings of Gina 'Toria, of whom I told you in my last, we should forget how to smile. Burton finds Gina a sore trial, and Gina, who is a very imp of mischief, makes Burton's life a misery to her.

I'm afraid I take a quite unholy delight in this state of affairs. Rosamond, whose sympathy is for Burton, tries to keep Gina in order—and fails. She says it is because I encourage the small brown imp, and between ourselves, I think I do. There is so very little to amuse one in the place.

I promised last time to tell you of the evening we spent at the Mathesons. The old people are quite charming, especially Mr. Matheson. He and I discussed English politics (you know how I enjoy them) nearly all evening, but that did not prevent me seeing, hearing and saying a great deal besides. One of the guests was a Mr. Craig—rather a personable man—who, it seems, saved Rosamond's life at some time or other. He is

very evidently *épris*, but Rosamond takes his adulation quite in a matter-of-fact way. And somehow I was not surprised, though this is probably her first grown up admirer, that she should hold herself with a certain maidenly dignity and—what shall I say?—finish?—for want of a better word. There is nothing *gauche* or unformed about her. I wonder—but I have wondered to you before—how Mrs. M. came to be her mother. They have absolutely nothing in common. Yet Rosamond is so loving, patient and docile with her mother.

Miss Abbie Matheson is by this time Mrs. Ian Grant and a very personable pair they will be. Abbie is a cheery little person, rather commonplace, I thought, and a wee bit (I see you smile) middle-class. She has strong Catholic tendencies, but hitherto her home influence has been too strong against them. Perhaps now she may follow them up; she will meet little opposition from her husband, I think.

And now enough of persons and things Colonial. I was gratified to learn from your last letter that you and Alex Carberry are befriending each other. Alex improves on acquaintance, as you say. She is, in my opinion, the dearest and sweetest and

best girl in England—or elsewhere. You will smile cynically at that. Or will you? I have hopes you are realizing at last what a delightful companion Alex would be “for the term of your natural life.”

Your news of Colonel Carberry's ill-health grieved me. Alex had herself written me about it, but she did not seem to apprehend any danger. Influenza she said it was. From your letter I glean it is rather a serious attack.

I need not say be good to her during this very trying time. Take her out for rides and drives when you can. She is almost too devoted a daughter and will not, I feel sure, leave her father's bedside unless some one (like you) persuades her that her own health will suffer if she does not take air and exercise.

Sir Humphrey continues well, I hope. What wonderful vitality he has! He has outlived his generation, and will, it is to be hoped, live to see his great-grandchildren around him.

How time flies! Trite but true. I have been away from England three months—and—these are the answers to your questions—the trying little cough has almost gone; I am very well—almost my old self. Does not that please you?

Rosamond returns with me to England on a lengthy visit in March or April. We leave Van-burensdorp (does it not sound like the very backwoods of creation?) after Christmas, and then go to Johannesburg *via* Natal.

This is Budget No. 3.

Your devoted aunt,

HELEN CRAYTHORNE.

P.S.—If you have time, take a run down to Dinsley Park, and let me know how matters are going on there.—H. C.

II.

FROM JUSTIN FORTESCUE TO MRS. CRAYTHORNE.

Lyddon Hall, Lyddon,

6th December.

MY DEAR AUNT HELEN:

Next to having a chat over your five o'clock tea-table was the pleasure of reading your Budget No. 3. That dull Karoo "dorp" has earned my everlasting gratitude in that it has restored your health. When one has only one aunt and she the most perfect of her kind, one does not want exactly to lose her.

I will not be so selfish as to suggest shortening

your South African tour, but I beg of you not to lengthen it beyond your original plans which, of course, means you are missed as much as even you would desire.

Everything goes well at Dinsley Park. Stebbing is a trustworthy fellow, and devoted to "Madam" as he calls you. I ran down there a few days ago and found all in order, so do not worry about it.

And now I have a piece of intelligence which may or may not be news. Alex and I are engaged. It came about in quite a natural way—we are neither of us very sentimental—and it makes little difference in our intercourse. But it will stop gossiping tongues.

Colonel Carberry (who is, I fear, dying) was very pleased when I spoke to him, and of course, grandfather is delighted.

You too, will be glad I know; so we have pleased every one all round, every one that matters, that is.

There is just one thing I want you to do in this connection. You know that for the past eight years Rosamond and I have corresponded quite freely and confidentially. Well, I do not want any change in this, so please add your in-

fluence to mine (I am writing to her by this mail) to prevent her from thinking that my engagement need make the slightest difference or alteration in our old friendship. I have spoken over the matter with Alex and she quite agrees with me about it.

You will assure Rosamond of this, and I need say no more.

My grandfather has felt this winter more severe than usual. He has a sort of superstition that he and his old friend Colonel Carberry will die about the same time, and common sense will not remove the feeling. He is battling just now against a touch of influenza, and as usual, he sent for me as soon as the doctor ordered him to bed. But Deberry, his old doctor, told me there was no danger, only at his age he has to be careful.

He sent for Alex too, and gave her a diamond necklace which would send another girl into raptures of delight.

We are very prosaic, we two. But I think (this *entre nous*) the reason why I plunged was because Alex is unexact, and that a fellow doesn't feel the noose dragging.

For the present, until this attack is over, my

grandfather will not let me return to London, so I am here at the Hall, a prisoner to his influenza.

Hence this long letter.

Your loving nephew,

JUSTIN FORTESCUE.

III.

FROM ROSAMOND MOLYNEAUX TO JUSTIN
FORTESCUE.

Durban, Natal,
23rd January.

MY DEAR JUSTIN:

The news of your engagement came as a pleasant surprise. Accept my heartiest congratulations. According to Mrs. Craythorne you are to be considered fortunate in winning Miss Carberry, who is her ideal of young womanhood. That is as it may be. Miss Carberry may consider herself fortunate, and I wish you both every happiness.

So you think your engagement need make no difference in our friendship? I am glad, and will try to think so too.

Mrs. Craythorne feels the heat of Natal very trying, and intends returning to the Cape very

soon, instead of going to Johannesburg as she had planned. She will probably stay at Somerset Strand or St. James' or some such seaside place until the southern summer is over.

Burton—poor Burton, who reminds me of Falstaff—groans perpetually at the heat. The only one who is perfectly happy is Gina Toria, who goes about in a loose white garb, and is livelier than the mosquitoes—which is saying a great deal.

Now about Mr. Craig. Of course, I recognize your right to question me, but you are under quite a wrong impression concerning him. We are not engaged, nor are we ever likely to be. I owe him my life—as I have already told you—and in return, I am trying to help him to reform. He is cursed with the drink mania, and I use my influence to keep him straight.

My mother, when her fears about him were allayed, gave him permission to write to me occasionally, and occasionally I reply to his letters. Now are you satisfied, oh most careful of guardians?

Yesterday brought me a letter from Abbie, who is Mrs. Grant now. She was very amusing over her first attempts at housekeeping.

My mother seldom writes. She does not miss me at all, I believe, being so very busy. I think she has not time even to miss my father. Perhaps that is not kind—but my father filled so large a part of my life, that my days, in spite of Mrs. Craythorne's kindness, are blank and empty without him.

Of Mrs. Craythorne's goodness to me I can scarcely find words to speak. We understood each other and were drawn to each other from the first meeting.

I am so glad I shall see your "Princess." Do you remember the fun we made over that, how many years ago? She must be very lovely and very lovable, and a very queen among good women, and I feel sure the woman of your choice is all that. I pray God to make you both very happy.

Your sincere friend,

ROSAMOND MOLYNEAUX.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAST DAYS AT THE CAPE.

ONE afternoon at the end of February, Alan Craig was making his way to Dunstable Street. He was very well dressed, wore a flower in his coat and an expectant smile in his eyes as he walked briskly along. He was going to call on Rosamond, who had returned from Natal. There was hope in his face. Rosamond had written kindly during her stay up-country and on the previous Sunday he had met her after Mass at the Cathedral. He could not speak as he wished on that occasion because Rosamond had been accompanied by some acquaintances.

But he felt he must speak before she left for England. For the past six months he had worked steadily and if the old craving had been too strong for him once or twice Rosamond did not know. He had made heroic efforts to keep straight for her sake.

To-day he had good news of his own prospects.

He had been offered a working partnership in a farm in Rhodesia and he had decided to accept it. It might be Rosamond's future home. Alan's slight figure drew itself up with unconscious pride, and his heart beat high with hope, as he knocked at the door of No. 8.

A slipshod, untidy, colored girl opened it, and having made known his request to see Rosamond, he followed the girl into what Mrs. Molyneaux persisted in calling "the front room."

Here he waited with what patience he could until the door opened and—not Rosamond—but her mother entered. Alan, who had of course expected Rosamond, covered his disappointment as best he could; Mrs. Molyneaux's greeting was somewhat curt, her manner questioning. Her look said plainly, "Why have you come?"

Alan summoning up his courage answered that unspoken question by asking to see Rosamond.

"I don't know as you can see her to-day, Mr. Craig," Mrs. Molyneaux said.

"Why not? I mean—the servant said Miss Molyneaux was at home. I—I particularly wish to speak to her this afternoon." Alan felt he was losing dignity and therefore ground. It was the tumult of his own feelings which unnerved him.

"The fact is—" he hurried on, "I—love your daughter, Mrs. Molyneaux, and I want your sanction to address her on the subject."

"It seems that you are rather behind-hand in asking that sanction, Mr. Craig," said Mrs. Molyneaux acridly. "If I am not mistaken you have already spoken to my daughter. And I may as well be plain with you. I will not allow my daughter, as long as she is under my control, to marry you."

They looked at each other for a full minute in silence. Then Craig laughed unsteadily.

"You are delightfully frank, Mrs. Molyneaux, so perhaps you will tell me why I may not seek your daughter in marriage?" The calm, dignified tone seemed to calm Mrs. Molyneaux's suddenly roused ire.

"My daughter is too young to think of such things for two or three years yet," she said evasively.

"True. But our engagement—if it came to pass—would necessarily be a lengthy one. I have very good prospects in the near future. Next week I leave for Rhodesia to take a partnership in a large farm there. In a short time I hope to own one of my own."

Even as he spoke the door opened and Rosamond entered. She was stronger-looking than before her trip up-country. Her pallor had given way to a delicate rose-tint, her figure had lost the angular lines of girlhood; the small shapely head held somewhat proudly, the regular features, brilliant eyes, and the fairness of her complexion all went to make a lovely woman. The promise of her childhood was amply fulfilled.

"Oh, it is you, Mr. Craig! I did not know you were here." She came into the room smiling and holding out her hand. Alan gave some answer—rather incoherent.

"That Menal" was Mrs. Molyneaux's mental comment. "I'll give it to her." She had warned the colored domestic not to tell Rosamond, but evidently the girl had told her.

There was an awkward silence for a few seconds after Rosamond's entrance. She felt the disturbance, and felt, too, that she was the unconscious cause; but she tactfully led the conversation from the dangerous topic, and presently Alan recovered himself and began to tell her of his intended departure.

Rosamond listened with interest, while Mrs. Molyneaux sat silent and frowning. She was

determined she would not allow Alan to speak to Rosamond, and sat there until he rose to go. It was significant of Rosamond's emancipation that her mother forbore to scold her as she would have done six months previous. She repeated the conversation which had passed between herself and Craig.

"I thought he had put that all aside," said Rosamond quietly in reply. "It is quite impossible I should ever marry him."

Mrs. Molyneaux looked relieved.

"Then don't give him any encouragement," she said brusquely, and turning, went out of the room.

Since her return Rosamond had seen a change in her mother's manner to her. She seemed ill at ease in her presence, was restless and fidgety about the house, so that it occurred to Rosamond that her mother found her presence in the household irksome.

Several times she came upon her mother and Ridgway (who had returned) in deep whispered conversation. They started at her approach and usually Ridgway, after a hateful leer, vanished out of her sight as quickly as his bulky form allowed.

Except for a distant greeting on the day of her arrival from Natal he had not addressed her, and she quietly ignored him; but his very presence in the house was enough to disturb her peace, especially as her mother seemed to consult him about everything she did.

So she was not at all surprised when her mother suggested to her to spend the remaining days of her stay in the Cape with Abbie Grant, whose new home was in Rosebank, one of the suburbs of Cape Town.

Rosamond suppressed the bitterness which this suggestion roused within her, and assented with no more show of feeling than if her coming farewell were to be for two or three days instead of two or three years. That her mother cared so little for their parting as to ask her to spend her last days out of her own home cut her to the quick.

Mrs. Craythorne had stayed at the Somerset Strand on her return from Natal, but Rosamond expected her in Cape Town daily.

It was a very sad-eyed Rosamond who waited for her on the Cape Town railway station some days after. But not even to Mrs. Craythorne or to Abbie could she unburden her crushed heart. Mrs. Craythorne, of course, thought her grief was

caused by this, her first farewell to the land of her birth, and dear little warm-hearted Abbie thought she knew very well what her friend felt. But neither of them fathomed the depth of her sorrow or could remove the crushing sense of loneliness she was experiencing. Now, more than ever, she missed her father. She had gone several times to Maitland to visit his grave. Out there on the lonely veldt he lay, far away from the city. She was glad to see that two young trees were growing close to his grave. They had almost a human look to the desolate girl. She had planted flowers, but she would be far away when they blossomed.

The mail previous to their departure brought letters from Justin and from Alex Carberry containing the news of Sir Humphrey Lyddon's death. "He died before his old friend, after all," wrote Justin; who gave Mrs. Craythorne the details of the sad event. Justin was his heir, and Lyddon Hall was Justin's now, but the place was hateful to him then, for he had always had a very deep affection for his grandfather. To him he owed everything that had made his life what it was. Left early an orphan, his grandfather had educated him, had given him every

advantage as to his future, and had made him his heir.

The end had come quite suddenly, and to Justin unexpectedly—for he had been lulled into a sense of security as to his grandfather's recovery by the doctors in attendance on him.

Sir Humphrey had often recovered from more serious attacks, and Justin did not apprehend any danger. The blow fell with sudden weight, and he could scarcely realize that death had claimed his victim.

"I feel I must get away from this place—from England outright for a time," he wrote. "Will you think me heartless for deserting you on your return? I think you will understand, though, and condone. Rosamond, too, will forgive. I shall return soon after your arrival, but I must get away from—everything and everybody for a short time."

"Poor boy! He feels his grandfather's death terribly," said Mrs. Craythorne to Rosamond, after reading the letter to her. "He has very deep feelings—deep and strong, though outwardly cold in manner. And he was very much attached to Sir Humphrey. Alex will be such a comforter in his hour of sorrow."

And Rosamond, who understood so well what Justin was suffering, wondered if the woman he was to marry were proving what Mrs. Craythorne said of her.

"We can not even write to condole with him," continued Mrs. Craythorne, "because he gives us no address. He has probably gone on the Continent somewhere out of touch with his own world. I do wish I had been at home when this happened. Poor, dear Justin."

Rosamond said little, but her sympathy was none the less keen. She had what Mrs. Craythorne called "happy flashes of silence"—a loving silence of perfect understanding.

"But Alex—oh, you will love Alex, Rosamond, you must. She is such a lovable little person—a queen in miniature, and so good."

Rosamond, tall and slender, smiled. "I hope we may be friends—for Justin's sake," she said quietly. She took a keen interest in all Mrs. Craythorne had to say—and she said much and often—of Alex Carberry.

She was to be Justin's wife—the woman he had chosen (so she thought) out of all the world. She did not know of the constant pressure brought to bear upon both of them to bring about this en-

gagement. She could not know that imperceptibly almost they had been coerced into it—lovingly and disguisedly it is true, for they were both self-willed characters and not easy to drive—but still as surely coerced as if more violent measures had been adopted.

The days were rapidly passing and but three remained before they were to sail for England.

Rosamond had one interview with Alan Craig and to his entreaties and protestations she had but one answer.

“Do not let us spoil our friendship,” she said, smiling a little sadly. “This love—I do not know what it is, but I like your friendship too well to want to lose it.”

And she would say no more; so he had to be content, to protest that he would keep hope, and soon he should come to England, and then—

Well, Rosamond grew a little weary of it all, and was glad when he went. There was too grievous a weight on her heart for this man’s wild words to affect her much. For she had had her worst suspicions realized. Her mother was about to marry Ridgway.

The feeling of horror and shame and degradation she experienced when this truth first came

to her brought to her a deeper meed of sorrow than she had yet known.

"Thank God I am going away," she said to Abbie, "I could never live in the house with that man as my mother's—husband."

"It is dreadful!" said Abbie. "And your father is barely six months dead. It is atrocious!"

"Thank God I am going away," said Rosamond. "I hope I shall never come back."

"And what of me?" said Abbie tearfully.

"You will come to England—or Scotland," returned Rosamond. "We shall meet then."

One of Rosamond's last visits was to the Cathedral. Here she had knelt to pray from her childhood. Before its altar she had laid the sorrows and the joys of her life up to this; at its communion rail she had knelt to share the Divine Banquet. The shrines and pictures and stained glass windows seemed somehow in sympathy with her as she passed slowly round the church, saying farewell to them all. There were always in Rosamond just such touches of childlikeness, coming as a surprise from a somewhat matured character—or rather finishing and rounding in sweetness a character otherwise austere because of its very strength.

CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. DELANEY.

"You are Rosamond, I am sure! I may call you so, may I not?" said a cooing voice at Rosamond's side. Turning quickly she saw a girl whom from the description she at once recognized as Alex Carberry. "Welcome to England!" continued the soft voice.

"Thank you—Alex," returned Rosamond smiling and taking the tiny, gray-gloved hand held out to her.

"I was so sorry not to be able to meet you at Euston, but perhaps you have heard that my father is laid up with influenza? That prevented me. However I hurried here as soon as I could. Aunt Helen and I have had a glorious talk, and she was coming to introduce us when Bobby Campion came in and then she sent me to find you. Bobby is one of Aunt Helen's orphans. She has a number of them. But tell me, are we going to be friends, you and I?"

There was something very winning in voice and

look as Alex Carberry stood in front of Rosamond and smiled up frankly at her. She was petite, but so well proportioned that she escaped insignificance. She had a childish, Greuze-like face, with large, soft, brown eyes; her hair was light brown and abundant. She was perfectly dressed in dove-gray and her whole bearing was daintily-pretty.

Rosamond took in all these details in less time than it takes to write them. She smiled at the directness of this tiny personage.

"I feel sure we are half-friends already," she said. "I have heard so much of you from Mrs. Craythorne that I almost feel as if we have known each other quite a long time."

"Now that is nice of you! Because Justin has done the same for you with me. You were looking at that photograph of him when I came in. It is a very good one of him, and one of the latest."

Alex took it up and examined it critically. It represented Justin looking somewhat grave, but Rosamond, who had not seen him for seven years, recognized the "old friend" who was also her guardian.

"Poor boy! He felt his grandfather's death

keenly and has gone abroad—I don't know exactly where. But he will be back soon."

"You do not write to him then?" The question broke from Rosamond almost involuntarily. Alex laughed. "No," she said, "we do not follow the usual mode of engaged folk. The correct thing, of course, is to write every day, is it not?" She looked up with dancing eyes at Rosamond, who laughed and shook her head.

"I can not say—from experience—but it is the usual thing, I believe."

"We are cheerfully unsentimental—Justin and I—and really it is not so bad as I fancied it would be—being engaged, I mean. You see, I am a very busy person and I hate sentimentality and when I saw Justin was going to propose I began to think it would have to be a refusal. To give up my work and the projects in hand was out of the question, and yet they left me little time for philandering. But really Justin is admirable. He is nearly as sensible as I am on this subject."

She laughed gleefully and Rosamond laughed with her, though she felt an inexplicable little thrill of disappointment.

"How tall you are!" continued Alex, "a veritable daughter of the gods—and, may I

finish the quotation?" She looked archly at Rosamond.

"Don't," she returned with laughing entreaty. "It might go to my head—which is in a perfect whirl as it is with the noises of your great city."

"Ah, of course this is your first visit to London? And it is very different, is it not, to South Africa? Come and tell me about your country. I take an intense interest in all that relates to South Africa. I'd dearly love to go out there and work for the blacks."

The two girls seated themselves, and Rosamond had nothing to do but to answer the flow of questions which Alex poured out. Rosamond had the ineradicable race-feeling that most Colonials bear to the colored people, and had scanty belief in the possibility of their regeneration, but Alex was too enthusiastic to be damped in her opinions, and, let it be added, too slightly acquainted with life in South Africa to form a correct judgment on the subject.

Alex had seen the famous Gina 'Toria, who was on her best behavior, and awed into something like quietness by the new sights and sounds of London city. Gina had joined her hands and closed her eyes and said her prayers with much

exterior semblance of piety when Miss Carberry had asked her to do so, and Miss Carberry went into mild raptures over "the dear little brown child," and had promised her a pretty silk handkerchief as a reward.

Mrs. Craythorne came in some time later, and smiled to see the two girls so much at their ease with each other.

"Ah, you two! I am glad you have been making friends, as the bairns say. Poor, dear Bobby Campion delayed me quite a time. I was afraid you would have to go before I could see you again, Alex."

"I really ought to be going, Aunt Helen. The dad misses me so while I am out. But now that he is up he can read and write and amuse himself until I return. We have been talking of South Africa—Rosamond and I, and she astonishes me by her want of faith in the education of the blacks."

"My dear, that is a very general want in the Colony. I have heard many people say the educated native is the spoiled native. And I remember when Justin returned from his Colonial trip seven years ago he said the same thing. By the way, have you any idea when Justin will return?"

"Not the most remote, Aunt Helen. As I was telling Rosamond, he and I are eminently matter-of-fact, though engaged. He came to me after all was over at Lyddon Hall, and said he was going abroad for some time and he thought he could get over his grief best alone. I at once agreed, and suggested that he need not even write unless the spirit moved him. He looked fearfully sad that day—and I did so want to comfort him, but I felt the best comfort was to leave him alone. He could not bear to be petted, like dad, for instance. Some men—most men—love to be petted, but not Justin. I felt ever so far away from him that day."

"I can quite understand the feeling," returned Mrs. Craythorne and added, "He will fight it out alone."

Rosamond, listening, wondered. This then was her friend, this strong, silent, self-repressed man, brave and kind and generous, with many friends, but not one to comfort him in his dark hour. And yet it seemed to her that in their similarity of sorrow she could have understood how to reach beyond that barrier of reserve which his grief had erected between him and the outer world.

But here were the two women who were dearest to him and they had failed. Rosamond smiled then at her own thoughts and woke as from a dream to bid Alex good-by.

"We shall really see more of each other because you are not entertaining," Alex was saying. "And of course Rosamond's recent bereavement also prevents her from going out much. So until the dad and I leave for the south of France—and that will not be until he is able to travel—we shall have a quiet, enjoyable time together."

And the small, voluble person talked herself into the carriage waiting for her.

During the days that followed Rosamond met many people, notwithstanding that Mrs. Craythorne was in mourning for Sir Humphrey Lyddon and ostensibly a non-entertainer.

But Mrs. Craythorne was the friend and confidante of a host of young people who flocked to her drawing-rooms in Mayfair for tea and counsel, and the news of her travels. On these occasions, Gina Toria in gorgeous Eastern silk raiment made pretense of helping her mistress at the dainty tea-table, and was in a fair way of being demoralized by all the presents she got (surrep-

titiously) and all the attention she received openly.

Miss Molyneaux was the one person in the household for whom Gina had a wholesome respect.

Alex Carberry's enthusiasm regarding Gina increased alarmingly through the small imp's artful assumption of piety to edify her. Gina, with the cunning peculiar to her kind, assumed at will the character suited to her audience. She had a more than usual share of intelligence, and picked up knowledge of all kinds quickly. Mrs. Craythorne continued to teach her English and needlework herself, because the valiant Burton had never got over her dislike of the girl, and Mrs. Craythorne took unto herself great credit for the training of this "brand snatched from the burning" as Rosamond laughingly called her. Rosamond was openly sceptical of good results in this treatment of Gina, and she herself acted far otherwise, with the result that Gina both feared and respected Rosamond, while she plainly set Mrs. Craythorne's rule at naught as far as she dared.

About a week after their arrival in London Rosamond received a visit from her grand-aunt,

Mrs. Delaney. Rosamond had written to her after landing in England, knowing that such would have been her father's wish. Mrs. Delaney was the only living relative of her father as far as she knew. A dear little old lady Mrs. Delaney proved to be, with her white hair and kindly face, her gold-headed cane and her delicate trace of Irish brogue. For she had lived many years in England, and only a trace of the brogue remained, yet it made her voice very sweet, Rosamond thought.

"I am going over to Ireland soon, my dear," she said, "and I wonder would you care to come with an old woman like me?"

Rosamond expressed her genuine delight at the prospect. It had been her life-long wish to see her father's native land.

"You're like your aunt Bridie, dear," Mrs. Delaney said, "and she was a beautiful woman and a good one and your father's favorite sister."

"He gave me her name," returned Rosamond. "My second name is Bridget, but he always called me Mavourneen."

"Mavourneen! Well, you were his one darling anyway. Poor Eustace. God rest him." And

then Rosamond told her all she asked of her father's life and death.

"And your mother, child?" asked Mrs. Delaney. "How could she part with you, for—how long? Two years? And she just widowed too! She must surely be very lonely without you?"

"It was my father's wish that I should come to England, and my mother would not go against that," returned Rosamond. She would not let Mrs. Delaney know that her mother was glad to be rid of her because of her approaching second marriage.

"And when you were coming to England at all why didn't you come to me, in the first instance, my dear? Surely your own kith and kin has the best right to take care of you? Of course I know that Helen Craythorne is an old friend of our family. I have known her since she was your age. But she isn't a relative."

"No, but it happened that Mrs. Craythorne came to the Cape very soon after my father's death—in fact he died while she was on her way there, and the letter announcing her coming was found on the desk at which he died." Rosamond's voice quivered, for she could not even yet

bear to speak of these things. Her grief was still too keen.

"I know, I know, child. I understand how it was that you came here with Helen Craythorne. She is a good woman. And Eustace wrecked his life for her sake. It's only right she should be good to you."

"I can never repay all her kindness to me during that awful time after father's death," said Rosamond.

"Poor child, poor child!" said Mrs. Delaney, patting her hand gently. "But now you will come to Glen O'Neill with me? 'Tis my own home. Perhaps you don't know that I'm an O'Neill from Donegal? I go there every year, and I hope to take you with me this time. It's a pleasant place in the summer. Helen Craythorne will spare you to me for a couple of months, will she not?"

Rosamond smiled. "We were going down to Dinsley Park," she said, "after Justin comes home."

"Justin? You mean Sir Justin Fortescue-Lyddon, as the papers call him now?"

"Yes, that's his imposing title. He is a sort of guardian—nominally only, in reality—of mine. We have not met for seven years."

"And he's engaged to Colonel Carberry's daughter?"

The old lady was well versed in details concerning her friends, though she lived a very quiet life.

"Yes, and she is a charming girl," returned Rosamond.

Mrs. Delaney was looking at Rosamond with twinkling eyes.

"And is there never a boy you left behind you in the Dark Continent, my dear?"

Rosamond blushed and laughed and shook her head. "Not one," she said.

"Well, well, you won't be long so, if the lads have eyes," said Mrs. Delaney.

When her grand-aunt went, Rosamond laid the idea of the proffered trip to Ireland before Mrs. Craythorne, who waxed indignant.

"Oh, but that is rank treason, mavourneen! What can Mrs. Delaney be thinking of? We have been barely a week in England and she wants to carry you away from me. And to Ireland of all places! Do you know Ireland?"

"No, I only know it from books, of course, and from what my father told me."

"Dear child, it's always raining there, espe-

cially in the wild north where your grand-aunt lives. The people will tell you 'It's a nice soft day, ma'am,' when it is pouring in torrents. And what will Justin say?" asked Mrs. Craythorne tragically.

"I do not mind Justin. It is you I am thinking of. It seems such a shame to go off like this just after landing, we may say. But then I shall be with you all the rest of my stay in England, after I return from Ireland," returned Rosamond.

"Oh, but I mind Justin, and so will you, too, when you meet him. Justin is not one to be trifled with. Not that I think you want to do anything of the kind, but—oh you understand, don't you?"

Mrs. Craythorne looked very perplexed. She could not well refuse to allow Rosamond to go with her relative, but she feared to face Justin's indignation should he return and find her gone to Ireland—and to the wildest, loneliest corner of it, too.

Rosamond was beginning to understand that Mrs. Craythorne and Alex were somewhat in awe of Justin—a fact which awoke mingled feelings within her. Involuntarily she had formed a mental picture of Justin which all she had

seen and heard of late had tended to shatter.

The Justin of her imagination was, it seemed, at total variance with the reality. She shrank, therefore, with a little inexplicable dread from meeting Sir Justin Fortescue-Lyddon—who was so unlike the Justin Fortescue of his letters. She recalled with a burning sense of confusion her outpourings of girlish confidences, and grew almost angry with his encouragement of them in his replies. How he must have been bored! And what a raw, unformed girl she must have seemed by her own showing.

So Rosamond was glad withal of this invitation to Ireland, since it would postpone their meeting for some time longer.

Letters from the Cape had brought her the account of her mother's marriage to Ridgway, and as she read, tears of shame and sorrow clouded her eyes. The luxurious room in which she sat faded before her, and instead there rose the little homely room where she had sat with her father in the winter evenings. Was it only six months ago? And now her mother bore another name, and her own home should know her no longer.

She felt lonely and depressed. What life was before her? She must set about earning her own livelihood when she returned from Ireland.

The small income left her by Murray Campbell proved all too little to clothe her in keeping with her surroundings, and she would accept no monetary help from Mrs. Craythorne.

Mrs. Delaney was wealthy, but was not aware of her grand-niece's straitened circumstances. It was a very sad-eyed Rosamond who called on Mrs. Delaney to know her final arrangements about leaving for Ireland.

"If my enemy, bronchitis, leaves me in peace we may start the day after to-morrow," the old lady said. "I will bring plenty of books, since we are both great readers, and you will find a piano at Glen O'Neill."

"I shall not trouble it much, Aunt Grace. The very sight of a piano recalls unpleasant memories of my school days."

"That is as you wish, my dear. Can you sketch at all?"

"Just a wee bit. I had a few lessons in Cape Town. If I have any taste it lies in that direction rather than in music."

"There's a fine bit of the Atlantic coast within

easy walking distance of Glen O'Neill. You are fond of the sea? Yes? I thought so. Well, you'll be happy at the Glen, or I am much mistaken."

Before leaving London Rosamond received a lengthy effusion from Alan Craig. He was content with his work, and wrote in good spirits. His hopes of making a home worthy of her were nearer realization than he had dreamed possible, he wrote. But Rosamond, reading, smiled and sighed. If he could only meet some girl in Rhodesia for that nice little home!

The excitement of her Irish trip put Alan Craig and his affairs out of her mind completely in a very short space of time, and Alan's hopes would have been destroyed had he known how easily he was put aside.

CHAPTER XX.

GLEN O'NEILL.

ABOUT a week after her arrival at her aunt's northern home Rosamond wrote a lengthy epistle to Abbie Grant at the Cape.

"Do you know the feeling created by having attained the improbable?" (thus ran the letter) "If so then you know how I feel. Every morning I wake expecting to find I have dreamt of being in Ireland, and then comes little rosy-cheeked Nan with her soft Irish brogue to assure me by her very presence that I really am on Irish soil.

"Aunt Grace improves on acquaintance and she is a whimsical, quaint, lovable, old dear, somehow in keeping with the Glen—with its bare rocks and its gray yet kindly skies. The house she owns is the only double-storied building in the Glen, except the schoolhouse.

"The Glen is well named, lying as it does between the hills. There are little whitewashed cabins dotted here and there, and the farms—well, how

the poor people farm these barren hillsides is a wonder to me after the Karoo. Through the valley runs a stream much more imposing-looking than the Liesbeek River which flows through Rondebosch, yet these people call their stream a burn, which means a rivulet or something equivalent—not by any means a river.

“And the people, Abbie, the dear, warm-hearted, hospitable people, so brave and cheery in their poverty and hardships, I can not express to you how they win me. Already I am at home among them. There is a Father O’Neill here, a venerable old man who has spent almost all his life in the Glen and who is a distant relative of Aunt Grace’s and therefore of mine also. There is a school-house with an upper story for the boys and a lower one for the girls, and the teachers, husband and wife, are known in the valley as the ‘master and mistress.’

“I have made friends with some of the children, especially with one boy named Thady McGlinchy in whose company I set out to find the Atlantic a few days ago. The sea is about two miles from the Glen, and Irish miles are longer than Cape miles, as I found to my sorrow. However, the reward was great. I wish you had been with me,

or in lieu of that, I wish it were possible to describe adequately the view which greeted me after the scramble 'up hill and down dale' as Thady said. It would take the pen or the brush of a genius to picture those long, majestic breakers, and the limitless gray sea beyond, and the overhanging cliffs above.

"From these cliffs the land slopes gradually until the valley is reached, and between sea and glen stretches a heather-clad, wind-swept, treeless waste, ending in rocky hillocks which shelter the valley somewhat from the fierce winds.

"Everybody and everything is in strong contrast to all I saw in England. There, all snug farms, trim hedges, orderly gardens, prim people; here the indescribable grayness that is subtly beautiful, patches of land hardly-won from the unwilling rock, soft air, lovable people, as happy-go-lucky as their own tumbling, joyous burn.

"Perhaps the air, the water, the hills seem grayer to my southern eyes, accustomed to the translucent blue skies of the Cape summer.

"But strange—or is it so?—I feel at home here. I love to go among the people; and what a welcome one gets! The clean kitchens, with their earthen floors, and peat fires burning, the cheery

greeting that is neverservile and always courteous, the best chair, the coziest corner, the—

“But how I am running on, Abbie dear! You will say I am bewitched, and perhaps the witchery of the place is on me.

“Coming here has helped me to regard my mother’s marriage more philosophically—the Glen breezes have swept away all but a deep content with everything and every one.

“When we return to London I must set about getting work of some kind. This life of idleness is demoralizing—but so enjoyable.

“Your last letter was too short by three sheets, though your excuse of having no domestic was a good one.

“Mrs. Craythorne writes frequently. She is going to Dinsley Park in August and expects me there. Justin has returned, to her great joy and Alex Carberry’s—though (*entre nous*) it does not seem as though Alex cared enough for Justin. She is so engrossed with her father and the East End that Justin is somewhat in the background; at least that is how it looks to a mere outsider.

“Mr. Alan Craig has written voluminously since we left the Cape. He is doing very well in Rhodesia and I have every hope that he is now

on the steady upward grade. He will recover the disappointment of his hopes in a certain direction. I have not, as you know, much faith in broken hearts. They heal in time.

"Mr. Grant must surely be the most devoted husband in South Africa! You will know why I say so if you recall the little confidence at the end of your all-too-brief letter."

Rosamond having finished her letter and addressed it, went in search of one of the farm hands who would bring it to the nearest Post Office—a distance of some miles inland. Mrs. Delaney rarely wrote letters, and Rosamond's was the only correspondence that came or went to Glen O'Neill.

Some days afterwards the sunshine tempted her seawards and with her henchman, Thady McGlinchy, she set out for the cliff. Thady, as his mother said, would walk to the world's end for Miss Molyneaux, but in his secret heart he did not understand why the young lady from South Africa always would be wanting to take the way to the cliffs. If 'twas to the burn, now, or the wee lough below the Glen, sure there'd be reason in it, for the trout would be worth while lookin' after. But out on the cliffs beyond, what was

there to get but rough sea, and wind enough to blow the horns off a goat! But then Miss Molyneaux answered all his questions about the far-away country that she came from, and he drank in all she told him, secretly resolving to go there as soon as he'd be able.

So he followed her across the bleak country, carrying her books in a strap across his shoulder. Miss Molyneaux always brought books, and sometimes she'd read and again she wouldn't, but all the vagaries of the said young woman were patiently borne with by the chivalrous, if shock-headed Thady.

To-day she did not read. She had a restless fit on her, and Thady, stretched at full length in the shelter of a boulder, watched her as she went to and fro on the cliff, the wind playing pranks with her hair and her cloak, and bringing deeper roses to her face.

Below them thundered the sea, "rough even when 'twas calm," as Thady said. The gulls wheeled and circled close to them, but other sign of life there was none.

Suddenly Thady looking toward the valley cried out, "Thon's a man," and he pointed to two figures breasting the steep slope leading to

the cliff. "And thon's Joe Gallagher that's with him," continued Thady, jumping to his feet in sheer surprise.

Rosamond, turning, saw them below her.

"Who is the man, Thady?" she asked. "What splendid sight you have to recognize the boy at this distance. Perhaps you know the man also?"

"No, I don't. Never seen him afore."

"Maybe he's a tourist. And anyhow, Thady, he won't come here if he sees us. There's a part of the cliff further on that is nearly as fine as this." And Rosamond turned her back on the approaching intruders.

But Thady's curiosity was roused by the sight of a stranger. He walked down the slope some way and whistled shrilly. Immediately a shrill answer came faintly back, for the wind was blowing inland.

"Hi, Joe! who's thon?" cried Thady and Rosamond turned to laugh at him.

"From London," came back against the wind.

"Dear oh!" said Thady, and "He's from London, miss," to Rosamond.

"From London!" Rosamond echoed in surprise. Perhaps—could it be?—but of course it was Justin. She almost ran down the slope.

"Hi, miss, take care, the brae's steep," cried Thady, but on went Rosamond, with Thady after her.

A tall man in an Inverness cloak with his head bent against the stiff breeze that caught them as they mounted, so that Rosamond could not see his face, and stood in doubt. But presently he lifted his head. "Justin," she said going forward eagerly, with both hands outstretched, "Oh, Justin!"

"Bride!" Her hands were caught and held and they looked at each other and laughed.

"I knew it was you," she said breathlessly, pushing back her hair after he had released her hands.

"And I would never have known you were you," he returned, "only for your eyes—they are the same. The rest of the Fairy of seven years ago is gone, or changed. I think your other name suits you better now—Rose of the world."

"Come up to the cliff. I have heaps and heaps and whole mountains to tell you. I am so glad you came here. How did you get away? Was not Mrs. Craythorne vexed that you should leave her again so soon? You have only just got back from Europe."

"Aunt Helen is pining for your return. Do you realize how you have walked into her affections, ward of mine? She wants you back, and spends part of every day abusing your aunt, Mrs. Delaney."

Rosamond laughed. "Oh," she said gaily, "is it not nice to be liked? Aunt Grace declares she is going to adopt me, and only I think the lazy life I have been leading for the past six months is demoralizing, I should not object. But I am going to be a breadwinner when we get back to England."

"A breadwinner! you!" Justin looked her over quizzically. A new Rosamond was this, from the one of his expectations. He scarcely knew what he had hoped to find, but he did know clearly that he was surprised. This tall, queenly, girl, with Irish eyes and Irish hair, with roses and lilies in her cheeks and the sweet gravity under her gaiety—with the mingling of childish confidence and womanly grace—this was not the Rosamond he had pictured.

The very incarnation of youth and hope she seemed, and at home amid the strong winds and barren hills of Ireland—she who had been nurtured under the softer southern skies.

"Even I," she said, facing him with laughing eyes. "But come! There's a lovely sheltered seat a short distance off, where we can talk comfortably. Are you superstitious? Because the people in the Glen say this place is unlucky. They call it The Witch's Seat. I do hope you are not superstitious?"

"Lead, and I follow," he returned gaily. It was impossible not to be gay in the company of this girl. Justin experienced an indefinable exhilaration not altogether due to the bracing air of the cliffs.

They found the seat, formed of a huge flat rock, narrow and long like a bench, and sheltered by two upright boulders, thus forming a natural protection from the wind.

"Look at those boys," cried Rosamond as they seated themselves. "They won't come within a hundred yards of this seat. It is my favorite nook up here. By the way, I suppose you went to Aunt Grace and then came on here?"

"Yes. I waited for some time, hoping you would come home, but I got impatient—so here I am."

Then they drifted into personal details. Of her father Justin spoke much and kindly, so that the

unaccustomed tears rushed to Rosamond's eyes. Then she told him what he had not yet learned—of her mother's second marriage, and of her own determination not to return to the Cape in consequence.

Justin spoke at some length—to his own astonishment when he recalled the fact later—of his grief at his grandfather's death. To no one, not even to Mrs. Craythorne, had he been able to speak of this, yet he found his thoughts and feelings taking shape in words for this girl who listened with a world of sympathy in her dark eyes.

Then Rosamond touched on his engagement, and praised Alex in no measured terms.

"Alex is thoroughly good," said Justin, "I have no doubt we shall get along all right." Then he changed the subject.

"He does not like to discuss his marriage," thought Rosamond, in some amusement. And then, "What an odd couple they are!"

But presently she returned to the attack, for she really liked Alex Carberry; the only fault she could find with her being a certain nonchalant appreciation of Justin's good qualities.

When at length they rose and set their faces

towards the valley, each felt as though the seven years that had passed since their last meeting had been successfully bridged. "I am so glad you are like your letters," Rosamond said in her frank way as they walked across the heather, followed by the two boys. "I was afraid."

"Of what?" asked Justin, turning to look at her. The wind was playing pranks with her hair, and deepening the color in her cheeks.

"That you might be horrid and prim and—and—English, you know," she said.

He laughed. "And I was afraid I should find my ward a bookish young woman, rather severe on ordinary every-day folk like me. There were all those exams you passed, and then you always wrote about books so cleverly. I positively quaked with fright when I realized my position as guardian to such a learned person as you."

"How ridiculous!" laughed Rosamond. "Are you not glad I am different?"

"And thankful," said Justin.

CHAPTER XXI.

"HIS HONOR."

THEY were golden days that followed for Rosamond, days spent with Justin roaming over the valley on voyages of discovery, and finding a welcome in the scattered cabins beyond the lough. Sometimes they set out to fish for trout in the burn and Justin taught her to handle a rod and line; or, when the weather was unfavorable for fishing they rowed about the lough in one of the few boats of which the Glen boasted. And all the time they were studying each other and finding in delighted surprise how much they had in common.

Justin had come with the intention of staying only a day or two, but more than a week had passed and he was still in the Glen. On wet days they read together, or Justin made the old house ring with his singing, while Rosamond played for him. He had won golden opinions among the people by his unaffected ways and by his generosity. He was "Your Honor" among them and

Rosamond laughingly adopted the title for him also.

Mrs. Delaney declared she did not know the old house, so changed was it by the presence of these two young people. Justin was a favorite of hers from his boyhood and Rosamond had won her affection completely.

They vied with each other in showing her little attentions and rarely went out without bringing back some trifle to show they had thought of her. Now it was a bunch of water lilies from the lough, again a basket of trout, and sometimes—though this had to be hidden from Anne MacManus in the kitchen—some of Molly McGlinchy's famous fadge or potato cake. And Mrs Delaney did all in her power to make their stay pleasant.

Ten days had passed in this way, when one morning Rosamond declared she was going to Ballydash post office for her letters. "Letters!" exclaimed Justin. "You ought to be thankful to be left in peace. Why trouble yourself with letters?" He was chipping his second egg at breakfast and looked across the table at Rosamond with the air of a profound philosopher.

"Oh, my letters are not of the boring kind," she

retorted, laughing, "and South Africa has not quite lost interest for me."

"Naturally," assented Mrs. Delaney. "But I agree with Justin. Letters even from friends are a superfluity in the Glen. It is sufficient to itself and to us."

"'There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet,'" quoted Rosamond with laughing eyes. "But—well, I want my letters all the same; Mrs. Craythorne may have written, and Alex Carberry too."

She looked reproachfully at Justin, who answered unmovedly: "They probably have—at least Aunt Helen has."

"And if I know Helen Craythorne, she has also probably expressed to you her irate feelings in the finest English on sixteen pages," said Mrs. Delaney, with twinkling eyes.

"Then why should I disturb the harmony of my being by going in search of those irate papers?" asked Justin, with a mock solemnity.

"But—Alex?" suggested Rosamond. "Her letters are waiting also. She has probably written to you every day."

"I doubt that," returned Justin, with a good-natured smile. "We are really quite un senti-

mental and prosaic about writing during each other's absence. And anyhow I know all she would have to say, so why trouble Ballydash post office to find out?"

"Trouble!" echoed Rosamond, shaking her finger at him, "as if I believe you! But whether or not you want your letters, I want mine and I am going with Andy Gallagher to Ballydash." She looked at Aunt Grace for approval.

"There's only the farm cart," said Aunt Grace warningly, "and a donkey to pull it."

"That sounds adventurous! I have never driven a donkey and I may never have the chance again."

"That's true," said Justin reflectively. "Donkeys have great staying power, and they have been known to achieve a pretty fair smash up, too."

"You won't frighten me," retorted Rosamond. "I'm going, unless Aunt Grace absolutely vetoes it."

"'A wilful woman'," quoted Justin to himself, but Rosamond heard him.

"Oh, you will be quite safe with Andy Gallagher, for if any one can manage that donkey he can. But you won't be home until the even-

ing; so if you go to Larry's Biddy—she is Mrs. Maguire, but no one calls her that—she will give you what she has in the way of lunch. Just say you are from the Glen House and you will get a warm welcome. Larry's Biddy knows me well."

Thus Mrs. Delaney.

"Why could we not ride into the town?" asked Justin after Mrs. Delaney had said grace, and they had risen from the table. "Can the Glen provide two horses and a lady's saddle?"

"I have no habit," said Rosamond.

"You don't need one. One of those trailing black gowns you wear in the evening would do very well—if we can get the saddle," said Justin.

"Which you won't," said Mrs. Delaney. "However, I'll leave you to settle the matter yourselves. Anne MacManus has come to the door six times to beckon me kitchenwards, and I expect she has waxed wroth and I had better go to her, if we are to have any dinner to-night." And the sprightly old lady of seventy-five tripped out of the room.

"I'd rather have the donkey," protested Rosamond.

"What! To ride?" he laughed.

"No—to drive."

"Very well. You may drive the chariot and if I can beg, borrow or steal a horse, I'll ride in with you. But just think of a day like this on the cliffs! You'll see nothing at Ballydash to make up for a lost day on the cliffs."

"There are more days," said Rosamond, "and more sunshine. And what will Mrs. Craythorne think of me for not having written to her! I have here a letter of eight pages for her, but I have to write to Alex and to the Cape."

"You need not hurry. Gallagher will not be ready for a good two hours. He has to catch his donkey yet, and that will take an hour. I know, for I tried to catch him myself some days ago."

"You?" Rosamond looked at the tall, gentlemanly figure with its air of dignity, even in the flannels he wore.

"Even I, and I succeeded, too."

"How Mrs. Craythorne would shudder if she knew of our behavior in the Glen! I must really put the donkey episode in a P. S. to her letter."

Rosamond laughingly turned to go. "There is plenty of time really," protested Justin, following her to the door. "Do not go yet."

"You are utterly spoiled by the atmosphere

of the Glen, Your Honor," she said, with her hand on the handle of the door. "I, at least, retain some sense of the passage of time. Are you aware it is fully ten days since you arrived here, and all that time we have been idling disgracefully?"

"And enjoyably. Say enjoyably?"

"Oh, yes, enjoyably, of course," admitted Rosamond.

"And there are years and years of hard labor before us, and the Glen must see the last of us some time, and—oh, why bother about anything until we must?" continued Justin.

This was quite a new mood for Justin to show. It was well perhaps that Rosamond did not fully grasp its drift.

"It is time to bother—if it be a bother, which I doubt, Your Honor, and go like a dutiful nephew and fiancé and write your letters. Who knows what share of blame I may get for your delinquencies?"

"Who would dare blame you? And Aunt Helen knows what a poor correspondent I am."

"Then I wonder why you wrote so often to me."

"I could not help myself there. Your letters had the power of compelling answers from me. And then they were talks, really, instead of

letters, were they not? It was another form of our present intercourse."

"But confess, now, you were often bored by those lengthy effusions?"

"On my solemn word—never!"

"Had I known you were—well, what you are, they would have been very considerably curtailed."

Justin looked grave in a moment.

"Come now, is that quite fair? Have I proved so unworthy of your confidence and friendship?"

"Oh, now you are serious. I did not mean to imply that at all. But—oh, I can not explain! You see, I had really pictured you as quite old—or at least middle-aged—why, I scarcely know. It was quite easy then to write everything, and your replies were so kind always. Do you understand?"

"Not quite. Because I am not old enough to be your grandfather, I have lost ground and value as a friend?"

"Yes—and no," said Rosamond, laughing. "And now I am going to write my letters, so go you and do likewise."

She was gone swiftly from him, and there was

a ghost of a laugh down the hall as her room door closed.

Justin, after a few minutes' reflection, took his hat from the hall, and set out in search of a horse.

About an hour later Mrs. Delaney stood at the door to watch the departure of what Rosamond called "The Cavalcade."

Justin, mounted on one of the Glen ponies, was, Rosamond declared, altogether too *distingué* to appear with her vehicle. Andy Gallagher, a middle-aged man with a humorous, weather-beaten face, and a gallant appreciation of "the purty colleen from over the way," had done his best to make the vehicle and the donkey fit to carry her into Ballydash, but his efforts did not show much results. Mrs. Delaney had given him cushions for the plank across the cart that did duty for a seat, and he had stuck bunches of heather on the donkey's harness, "to give the baste a bit of gentility," as he said.

Rosamond, bubbling with laughter and the spirit of adventure, allowed Justin to help her into the cart, and with many wavings of farewell to Mrs. Delaney, and a chorus of good wishes from

the entire body of domestics who had gathered to see them off, they drove away at a good pace—good, that is for Andy's donkey, which, as its owner said, "was a well-manin' baste, but wantin' in stiddiness."

CHAPTER XXII.

A DAY IN BALLYDASH.

"Is't weddiners, ye are, Andy?" asked a big, pleasant-faced woman, coming to the door of "The Harp and Shamrock," the only hotel in Ballydash. "Ye come up in gran' style," she added, with a jolly laugh, and looked in a friendly way at the strangers.

"Troth, an' it isn't then. It's the quality from the Glen House," returned Andy.

"You're welcome as the flowers in May, miss, and you, Your Honor. Sure I misremembered ye at first," said Mrs. Maguire, coming out to the cart from which Justin was assisting Rosamond.

The journey had been accomplished without any mishap, and Andy Gallagher had beguiled the time with some of his racy stories, which drew peals of laughter from both his hearers.

"And how's the mistress at the Glen House? She's the fine open-handed lady, God bless her," continued Mrs. Maguire.

Rosamond, with laughter in her eyes, answered

Mrs. Maguire's questions and together they followed her into the hotel, into the parlor with its snowy sanded floor, and horsehair "suite" that was the pride of its owner's heart.

"Mrs. Delaney said you were an old friend of hers," Rosamond said. "And we were to put up nowhere else for lunch."

"Sure it's downright vexed I'd be if ye went anywhere else, miss, and I'll give you the best lunch ye can get in the town or me name's not Biddy Maguire. Maybe now, ye'd like a wee cup o' tay before ye'd be goin' out to look at the town? It's only eleven o'clock now or thereabouts, and ye'll maybe not be wantin' lunch till one."

Rosamond looked at Justin, but judged by his glance that eleven o'clock tea had no attractions for him, so she thanked Mrs. Maguire. But she was not going to be deprived of a chat with her, and when Justin said something about his pony, she gaily told him she could dispense with him for half-an-hour.

Mrs. Maguire, nothing loth, held forth at great length on the greatness of the O'Neills; on the "fine darlin' man" Sir Justin was, and how "t'was he had the good drop in him annyway," for the

tales of his generosity to the poor of the Glen had traveled into Ballydash, and finally on the fashion of Rosamond's gown. A subject of interest to Mrs. Maguire, and indeed to all who met Rosamond was "the counthry she came from."

"And sure, miss, I did be thinkin' twas black ye'd be, askin' your pardon. Patsy Connelly went to South Africa wanst and 'twas he tould us the people there wasn't of a good color, by rayson of the sun bein' mighty strong."

And Rosamond laughingly told her much about her native land, and in the process destroyed many fanciful illusions regarding it, in the mind of Larry's Biddy.

When Justin returned he suggested that they should go out and explore the village, and Rosamond readily agreed.

"I caught glimpses of lovely hawthorn hedges and wee gardens further down the street," she said, as they stepped out of the hotel, followed by many curious eyes.

"And where's the post office?" she said, as if remembering only then the object of her presence in Ballydash.

"Do you believe in presentiments?" asked

Justin, looking, not at her, but at the row of thatched cottages that lined the street.

She looked up at him quickly. "Yes, why?"

"I have a presentiment there is something in the letters for us that will put an end to—the Glen for me."

"You may be quite sure of that," returned Rosamond, trying to speak lightly, but turning away her face that he might not see the shadow falling on it. "Of course Mrs. Craythorne, and Alex Carberry too, will have written to know the cause of your delay in the Glen. You only came for a day or two, at first, you remember?"

"I remember," he said, "and—I want you to grant a favor. Let us leave the letters unopened until we are returning to the Glen. Let us have just this one day—or part of it—like the other days. Will you? You see," he continued eagerly, almost boyishly, "if there is a demand for my presence I could not possibly leave until to-morrow morning in any case. So why spoil what may be our last day?"

"Then leave your letters unopened, if you wish," said Rosamond. "Mine will not affect you."

He looked at her now.

"I suppose that fellow Craig has written," he said.

"Possibly," returned Rosamond, stopping to break off a spray of white hawthorn to put in her belt.

Justin was silent for a few minutes, and presently as they resumed their walk, Rosamond looked at him. His somewhat obstinate mouth was set in a grim line, and there was a frown between his eyes.

"As your guardian, I am going to ask a question that might be impertinent from a friend," he said. "Are you going to marry Craig?"

"Oh, no," said Rosamond, with a little laugh that was somehow tremulous in spite of her. "We are very good friends, that is all. He saved my life you know, and I am trying to save his—in another way, of course."

"And he? Has he no hopes?"

"Not now, I think. And now, is there any reason, Your Honor, why I may not have my letters? But no. I will not read them, since you wish it. Let us have just this one hour in peace."

Her mood changed quickly, and Justin, following her lead, entered into the spirit of it, and once more they were as a pair of happy go-lucky

children, irresponsible, easily-pleased, and full of the gaiety of the rich summer noon.

They met a beggar-woman, half blind, very ragged, and carrying a bag on her back. Justin put a coin into her hand and drew forth a stream of picturesque blessings which wound up with, "and may ye be long spared to one another, and may ye live aisy an' die happy thegither."

At this point, Rosamond walked on by herself, her face a study of mixed expressions. There was laughter and there were tears too, a flash in the eyes as of pain, and quivering smiles on the lips, a rush of crimson color succeeded by an unusual pallor.

It seemed to her that the whole day they were on the verge of tragedy, and kept back only by laughing at its threatened terrors.

When Justin joined her she chattered volubly about the beauty of the hedgerows, the opalescent tints on the distant hills, the vividness of Ireland's green—of anything and everything but of themselves.

At the "illigant lunch" provided by Larry's Biddy, they made a pretense of hilarious enjoyment, but Mrs. Maguire was vexed entirely;

she declared that they did be showin' such poor appetites.

"But sure, miss, when Larry Maguire was the bonniest boy in Ballydash and would be for tratin' me, I'd be that put about with the eyes of him I couldn't touch a mortal bit or sup. And maybe 'tis that way with you, for Sir Justin's a gran' man and fair set on you, it's plain to be seen."

And Rosamond was fain to explain Mrs. Maguire's mistake.

"And is't engaged to a young English girl he is, then? Dear oh! Well, miss, if I may make so bold, it's the best part of him you've got. Well, well, I won't say it, if 'twould be vexin' you. And you'll be goin' back to the Glen now? God speed ye, miss. 'Tis yourself has the Irish heart in you annyway. Sure 'twas a mistake you were born out of the country, you that have the bonny brown hair and the rosy cheeks of the purtiest girls round Ireland."

Justin was outside seeing about the cart and the pony while this conversation took place, and presently he entered to announce all was ready. Rosamond said good-by to Mrs. Maguire and climbed into her seat behind Andy Gallagher's donkey.

Andy gave signs of having imbibed pretty freely of the contents of the bar at the "Harp and Shamrock" but he was in the best of humors and still capable of managing his chariot. Rosamond encouraged him to tell stories, and Justin rode beside them for the most part in silence.

When they were near the Glen House, Rosamond took out her letters. There was one from her mother and one from Alan Craig. Mrs. Craythorne's was a bulky envelope which for some inexplicable reason she left to the last.

Her mother's news was sad, and for a time Rosamond was back in the Cape with her in spirit. Ridgway had turned out a domestic tyrant of the worst description. He was miserly, and instead of the "establishment" on which her mother had set her heart, they lived in a small house in Claremont, where she had no servant and had to work hard to please her husband. But that was not the worst. He drank heavily at times, and then he beat her unmercifully, so that, powerful woman as she was, she was disabled for days after.

Tears of anger, indignation, and pity rushed to Rosamond's eyes on reading this. She longed to be near her mother in her trouble. The idle,

happy days she had been spending rose like a reproach before her. She had been so content with the easy, joyous life of the Glen, while her mother had been enduring agony of mind and body at the Cape. That Mrs. Ridgway had brought the trouble on herself did not lessen the pain she was enduring, or lessen Rosamond's compunction.

"And yet," she thought, "what good could I do mother, even if I were there? He is her husband and I could not interfere. Poor mother! I wish I could bring her here and we could live quietly on my income, helped out by some work that might be obtainable even here."

But that scheme was not feasible. All that lay in Rosamond's power she did, though it was little. She sent her mother all the money she could spare, and wrote a long, comforting letter to her—but that was on the next day.

While she had been reading her letters, Justin was perusing his.

"I have got my recall," he said presently, "Alex and her father have been at the cottage on the Dinsley Park estate for a month and now they are going to the south of France, so they want me back before they leave England."

"And here is Mrs. Craythorne's letter entreating me to go to her now that Alex is going away. But I have promised Aunt Grace not to leave the Glen until she goes."

"Could you not return to England with me?"

The simple question had slipped from him, almost unaware. In view of the forces at work with their lives, it had almost a tragic meaning to the girl, but she answered quietly, "I think I will keep my promise to Aunt Grace. A promise is a promise."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A YOUNG WOMAN OF CHARACTER.

"BUT what did you do with yourself in that outlandish place, my dear Justin?" asked Mrs. Craythorne.

"Yes," chimed in Alex between two sips of tea, "what did you do with yourself?" She was looking very pretty in a brown gown and hat the color of her eyes.

Justin looked from one to the other of his questioners smilingly.

"I suppose the description of a day in Mark Twain's diary would do for the record of your days at Glen O'Neill," continued Alex.

"You mean 'Got up, washed, and went to bed.' Well, yes, but I managed to do a few other trifles besides," returned Justin. "I fished for trout in the wee lough—local vernacular, that—and I rowed in a boat on the same."

"And where was Rosamond?" asked Mrs. Craythorne.

"She generally came with me, and I taught her

to fish and row. She could handle an oar pretty well in the short time I was there."

"Short time indeed! It was full three weeks," exclaimed Mrs. Craythorne reproachfully.

"Not quite—you must not count the time spent in traveling there and back."

"Well, you will stay at the Hall for some time now, I hope, and you will ride over here every day. Alex will be going soon, and you must see a great deal of each other before she goes." Thus Mrs. Craythorne.

Justin and Alex looked at each other and smiled like two mischievous children getting lectured. Justin had come back to his home fully determined to break his engagement with her. He felt that neither of them cared sufficiently to feel any great pain at such an issue. Yet Alex had greeted him with an unusual display of affection, and had spoken at length of her father's satisfaction with their betrothal and future marriage, and had even shaped plans for that future they were to live together at the old Hall. And while she spoke Justin felt as though the silken meshes were being drawn around him and in honor he could not speak the words he had intended. Yet he felt that Alex was acting solely to please her

father, who absorbed all the passionate love of her nature. It was his wish—therefore she would go through with the marriage, even though she felt nothing but friendship for Justin.

Neither of the women who considered they understood him perfectly realized that under the smiling exterior he bore to them there was concealed a nature at war with itself. If he looked worn and anxious, or was silent and taciturn, Mrs. Craythorne ascribed it to his grief at losing Alex so soon again. Mrs. Craythorne had persuaded herself and Alex that Justin cared deeply for his future wife.

And Justin had been content—until he went to Glen O'Neill.

Thinking over these things in the quiet of the library at the Hall where he was alone, he faced the problem of the future with what courage he could muster. There were deeper depths stirring within him than he had thought himself capable of, and these, because of his honor, must be crushed at whatever cost.

Rosamond, too, must be preserved from suffering through him. He dared not think that she regarded him otherwise than as guardian and friend. That last day in the Glen when the very

air had been electric and they had had to shut their own ears to their own heart-beats—that day he had thought—

But no, it was impossible. Rosamond would probably go back to South Africa and marry that Craig fellow, if only to complete his reformation. That was just the kind of thing good women did for the scamps of his sex.

After a long, silent battle Justin rose victor over himself, and strong in resolution to face his future. He was gentle and more attentive to Alex in the days that followed, and if he wearied of the conversations that began and ended with “dad” he did not show it.

The days slipped by, and the time for the Carberry's departure to the continent drew near. Colonel Carberry's only sister, Mrs. Devine, had come from her Dublin home to accompany them. Colonel Carberry's health was still a matter of anxiety and his doctors told Mrs. Devine what they had concealed from his daughter, that his heart was weak.

One of their last days in England was spent at Lyddon Hall; and as Alex roamed over the house with Mrs. Craythorne and her aunt, she formed plans for the re-decoration which was to take

place in preparation for her coming as its mistress. Justin was unusually gay that day, and he himself could not have explained why.

Mrs. Craythorne, whose secret anxiety concerning him had assumed alarming proportions, was greatly relieved to note his good humor and gaiety. It was then she seized the opportunity of suggesting that he should go to Holyhead to meet Rosamond and bring her to Dinsley Park. She had been afraid to make the suggestion before, prevented by a feeling that it would not be acceptable. Justin had spoken but little of Rosamond, and that little in a stiff, constrained way, and Mrs. Craythorne concluded he had been disappointed in her. But now Mrs. Delaney was bringing her back, as she herself was going to the Riviera, and Mrs. Craythorne did not wish the girl to make the journey across England by herself.

So in the rose-garden at the Hall she found courage to ask Justin to go and bring her to Dinsley Park. Justin started and changed color, but quickly recovered himself.

"I understood that Mrs. Delaney was sending a little Irish maid with Rosamond," he said.

"Yes, but just think of those two helpless

young things, for the maid is a raw country girl, I suppose, and no protection to Rosamond."

"Oh, you must go, Justin," put in Alex. "Rosamond knows nothing of traveling in England. She might get lost on the way to Dinsley. Of course you will go?"

She was gathering the last roses, and spoke with a little imperious air he had not noted before.

"I intend to be friends with Rosamond Molyneux when I get time, which means when the dad is quite better, and I am not obliged to nurse him any longer. Rosamond strikes me as being a young woman of character, not at all a bread and butter miss, such as I confess I had expected."

"Rosamond is a dear girl," said Mrs. Craythorne, "I really am very fond of her." She looked with ill-concealed anxiety at Justin, whose face was as expressionless as it was capable of being.

"That is well, since she is to be your companion until I return," said Alex complacently.

"You have not said you would go to bring her to me, Justin, dear?" Mrs. Craythorne said, slipping her hand into his arm.

"Have I ever refused you anything yet?" he

asked, looking down at her with an expression she could not understand.

"You are a dear boy! I want to give Rosamond a surprise when she comes. The child will have probably not a decent gown to appear in so I have sent to London to get a few things for her. Black suits her well—she is so fair. By the way, did it strike you, Alex, what a marvelously Irish look she has—blue-gray eyes that are violet sometimes and sometimes black, clear white and pink complexion and dark-brown hair—quite an Irish list of charms."

"She is very pretty," said Alex, "and what is better than mere prettiness, she has *chic*. But now I must really be running home to my dad and the auntie. She tells me he gets so restless if I am away too long from him. Am I hurrying away too soon, dear Aunt Helen?"

"No, it is time to go now. Justin, you will drive to Dinsley with us, I hope?"

And Justin, feeling strangely as if he were being driven himself, went back to Dinsley, struggling valiantly not to look bored when Alex kept up a running fire of anecdotes of dad.

The Carberrys left for the continent very soon after that visit to Lyddon Hall, and the following

day after their departure Justin left Lyddon to meet Rosamond as arranged, and bring her to Dinsley Park.

Mrs. Craythorne had a small house party for the autumn, and already was forming schemes for Rosamond's future. Now that Alex Carberry was almost settled in life, Rosamond offered to this genial match-maker a new subject for her efforts. With this view she invited two eligibles and favorites of her own—for she was very popular with young people—and by skilful hints, had roused their curiosity about the beautiful Colonial. Rosamond's arrival was anxiously awaited.

"They ought to be here to-day," Mrs. Craythorne said at breakfast the morning after Justin had left, "unless Mrs. Delaney carries her niece off to the Riviera with her. She is quite capable of disappointing me."

"I wish you had allowed me to go with Sir Justin," said Bobby Campion, who was privileged to say what he liked. "I'd have managed Beauty's aunt: St. George and the Dragon, you know—that sort of thing suits me." Mrs. Craythorne smiled at him indulgently, but as the day wore on and the travelers did not come she grew anxious.

In the evening, her worst fears were realized. A telegram came bearing the news of a terrible railway collision and two of the injured were Rosamond and Justin. The telegram was from Rosamond whose left arm only was hurt; it told that Justin was laid up at a farmhouse in Warwickshire with a fractured leg but was not otherwise hurt. She begged Mrs. Craythorne to come to her immediately, if she were able to travel.

There was dire confusion and excitement at Dinsley Park on the receipt of this news. Mrs. Craythorne made instant preparations for her journey. She entreated her guests not to leave Dinsley, as her friend, Lady Halliwell, would act as hostess in her absence.

Burton, the invaluable, accompanied her mistress, and by her stolid good nature and perfect training in her service proved of the greatest assistance. She treated Mrs. Craythorne like a child, and excited and unnerved as Mrs. Craythorne was, she put herself entirely into Burton's hands. The journey was made successfully and when Mrs. Craythorne at last met Rosamond in the farmhouse whither they had been taken after the accident she was calm and self-controlled.

"Thank God you are safe—and Justin! What of him? Has he had proper care? Is he getting well? Oh, I can not tell you what I have gone through during the past twelve hours. But I thank God it is no worse."

Rosamond quietly told her all she knew of the accident. Justin had certainly saved her and himself by his presence of mind. He was doing well now, and the doctor who was in almost hourly attendance upon him spoke hopefully of his condition. He was conscious and could see Mrs. Craythorne.

"Bring me to him, mavourneen. I am longing to assure myself of his safety."

So into the room in the farmhouse where Justin lay Mrs. Craythorne hurried breathless and excited, but the sight of him, perfectly collected, if somewhat pale, and a prisoner to his couch, calmed her. She knew how Justin hated fuss, and modified her bursts of joy and gratitude.

Between them Rosamond and Justin told her all they knew about the accident—all except one part which concerned themselves only.

In that tense, awful moment that had brought them, young, full of vigor and life, face to face with death, all veils had been torn aside and their

hearts had been revealed. Death was before them both, and in its presence, quite simply, they had spoken words which they thought were their last on earth.

Both had been brought unconscious to the farmhouse where Mrs. Craythorne found them, and both had escaped with but slight injuries. Nan, too, the little Irish maid that Mrs. Delaney had sent with her niece, had escaped in a miraculous fashion while those in the same compartment with her had been either stunned or killed.

The doctors of the nearest village were soon on the spot of the accident and Rosamond's arm was set in splints. She recovered consciousness quickly, but Justin lay for hours unconscious.

Rosamond feared at first he was dead, but the doctor assured her that he was only stunned. From the windows of the farmhouse she could see the men at work carrying away the dead bodies of those unfortunates who had lost their lives, and unnerved as she was by all she had undergone she hid her face and sobbed. On seeing this the doctor insisted on her going to lie down and rest, and assisted by the kindly daughter of the house she obeyed. When she heard that Justin had recovered consciousness sleep came to her.

When she awoke the night was far advanced and the girl whose room she shared was fast asleep. Through the long hours until the dawn Rosamond lay sleepless, trying to nerve herself to face the ordeal of the morrow—and of many morrows. Life must go on for her and Justin as if the words they had spoken had never been uttered. Justin was bound in honor to marry Alex Carberry. What return would it be to Mrs. Craythorne for all her goodness to frustrate the dearest wish of her heart—that of seeing Alex Carberry Justin's wife?

As for herself Rosamond determined to seek out a situation as a governess in some place far removed from Lyddon Hall, or if that were not obtainable she would offer her services gratis in some teaching order of nuns, where at least she would have a home.

In the dim dawn Ruth Adams, the farmer's daughter, helped her to dress, protesting all the while that it was too early for her to get up.

Mrs. Adams came in and gave a good account of Justin's night. He was sleeping now, and after all they had gone through it was a mercy of Providence, in Mrs. Adams' opinion, that they

had escaped with their lives. Mrs. Adams was voluble and incoherent, but kindly.

The morning hours passed and when Justin had sent three or four messengers for her, Rosamond at length mustered up courage to go to him.

Justin, at that first interview, would have broken forth into passionate speeches. He was yet quivering from the joy of finding that Rosamond cared for him. But there was an air of gravity, of remoteness, almost of severity about Rosamond that checked and awed him involuntarily. The delicate fairness of her complexion was no longer rosy tinted, the features had sharpened, the eyes were steady, the lips firm. There breathed from her whole form a purity that made his words seem in some inexplicable way a profanation.

"You are better? Your arm—?" Broken words came from him as she entered.

"It is not very painful. And you? The doctor tells me we had a wonderful escape. Your fracture is painful?"

"I feel more comfortable now. But what does anything matter now? Rosamond, you have not forgotten?"

"I think it would be well for us both to forget," she rejoined, forcing her voice to be hard.

Rosamond had anticipated that her task of bringing him to her view would be difficult, but under his torrent of words, her heart well-nigh failed her. In vain she reminded him of his engagement to Alex Carberry. In vain she put before him his dishonor if that engagement were broken by him. This strong masterful man in all the force of a first passion scoffed at the dishonor and made light of his engagement. The girl waited quietly until he had finished. She felt her will as strong as his and knew she would succeed eventually.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FORTESCUE!

DURING the weeks that followed Mrs. Craythorne's arrival at the farm Rosamond succeeded in avoiding Justin's company without much effort. For one thing he was a prisoner to his couch, and after Rosamond herself had completely recovered the use of her arm Mrs. Craythorne had sent her with Burton to Dinsley Park.

Before leaving the farmhouse Rosamond saw Justin alone for a short time. As she had expected, the presence of Mrs. Craythorne with all that she represented had brought him to a sense of his duty. Yet he was as determined on his course of action as before, only less impetuous in his plans, more self-controlled, cool and more calculating.

This mood was more dangerous than the first. There was a quiet air of resolution which while it secretly delighted Rosamond, in spite of herself, yet caused her to exert all her power to shake it.

"I will never marry you," she said at length. "You will gain nothing by breaking your word to Alex except the contempt of us both."

He looked at her steadily and her glance wavered and fell.

"You would condemn me to a life of misery then—you, who said——"

"You will not be unhappy," interrupted Rosamond surprised to find herself pleading, "Alex is good and——"

"Yes, she is too good to marry a man who does not care for her."

"But you did—you do still. What has she done? She is still as pretty, as nice as she was before—that day. When I am away you will think as I do about this."

"I did not know then what I know now. I don't know how this is going to be settled; but," and he looked at her gravely, "I do know that you will be my wife some day. You may hide yourself from me. I daresay that is what you are meditating, but I shall find you."

So Rosamond, disconcerted, perplexed, but not altogether unhappy, had left him, determined, as he had surmised, to take herself completely out of his life.

She set herself to find a situation as soon as she reached Dinsley. But her search was rendered unnecessary by a letter from the Cape which came about this time.

It was from her mother, and contained news which surprised and saddened her. Ridgway had disappeared, leaving her mother ill, friendless and almost penniless, in the home where she had never known a day's happiness with him. She had learned that after selling out all his business he had left the Cape Peninsula and no trace of him could be found. His acquaintances surmised that, hearing of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war, his courage had failed him and he had taken his cowardly person out of danger's way, finding safety in England or in Europe, under an assumed name.

"I must go to my mother at once," thought Rosamond, and sat down to write the news to Mrs. Craythorne, who was expected at Dinsley with Justin in a few days' time. "I must go before they return. Fortunately that cheque Aunt Grace gave me will pay my expenses and Nan's to the Cape." Thus ran Rosamond's thoughts as she sat in her room at Dinsley, where indeed she had spent most of her time since she

arrived, to the disappointment of a section of the house party who still kept together, notwithstanding the prolonged absence of their hostess.

Rosamond's preparations were soon made; and as Nan Maguire expressed her firm resolve to "folly Miss Molyneaux to the world's end and further," the two left Dinsley Park the day before Justin's return. Rosamond left a letter for both Mrs. Craythorne and Justin. To the former she apologized for her hasty departure, but under the circumstances she hoped for Mrs. Craythorne's forgiveness. To Justin she wrote briefly, expressing her intention of devoting herself to her mother, whose illness made it her daughter's duty to be with her. She added that it would be quite useless for him to follow her, as she intended leaving the Cape Peninsula, and her future residence was uncertain. But she forgot that the war then going on in South Africa would prevent her from traveling up-country as she intended. This however, Justin remembered, and smiled.

Yet the brevity of her farewell, its coldness, its almost harshness made him wonder if he should ever succeed in winning her consent to be his wife.

Up to the time of his return to Dinsley Park he had not been able to face the task of writing to Alex Carberry to seek his freedom. He was more shaken than he cared to admit by the accident, and after Rosamond went from the farm Mrs. Craythorne found him a fractious invalid. But now he had regained strength and he could look the future squarely in the face. He took Mrs. Craythorne into his confidence on the evening of their journey to Dinsley.

"Aunt Helen, do you think Alex would care very much if our engagement was off?" he said casually.

"Care? Of course she would care. It would break her heart. And as to her father, if he thought there was any possibility of such a thing it would kill him. Why do you say such wild things?"

Justin looked out of the carriage window; they were driving from the station. "I am sorry, but I am afraid it must end," he said quietly.

"End?" echoed Mrs. Craythorne in a horrified tone. "End! Are you mad, Justin? You can not break your word—you—a Fortescue? What has happened that you should talk like this? Is there—is there some one else?" Justin had never

been "a ladies' man" and Mrs. Craythorne thought she had all his confidence.

"Yes," he said, in the same quiet tone. "There is—some one else."

Mrs. Craythorne sat looking at him in horrified surprise. That ominous quietness, which she knew so well, foretold that his mind was quite made up on the subject in question.

"Who is it? You *can not* dishonor your name, you *can not*! Think of the disgrace! How could I ever face the world—our world again? And think of Alex—poor Alex—who is so fond of you! And the Colonel! Oh, it will kill him. I feel it will. He was so happy thinking he was leaving his darling in your safe keeping. And now—Who is it? Some one you met in Ireland?"

"Yes."

"And she—cares for you?"

"Yes."

"And you will marry her—in spite of all I have said?"

"If she will have me—which is doubtful. Look here, Aunt Helen, there is no use going into hysterics over the matter. I will put the case honestly before Alex Carberry, and if she does not give me my freedom—why, then, I suppose I

must marry her. But I think she engaged herself to me to please her father and you, so it will not cost her anything to set me free."

"Think of the dishonor, Justin! A Fortescue going back on his word!"

She struck at the most vulnerable part of his character there.

"Honor!" he repeated irritably. "What are honor or dishonor to a life of misery? You can not understand, Aunt Helen. I have never, as you know, bothered much about women—but I have met one woman who—well—" he laughed mirthlessly at himself, "I am not going into rhapsodies over her, but you may rest assured she will make a worthy mistress of the Old Hall, if she marries me, which as I said before is doubtful. She is the soul of honor herself and knows I am engaged to Alex. There, don't let us talk any more of the matter now. Here we are at the Park gates, and there are your guests assembled to welcome you."

The said guests exclaimed one and all sympathetically at the careworn and harassed appearance of Mrs. Craythorne, and Lady Halliwell carried her off at once to her boudoir.

"Who could it be?" that was the question

which kept repeating itself in Mrs. Craythorne's brain. Justin had met no one in Ireland who was likely to attract him. Had he not spent all his time in that outlandish Glen? And was there any one there who would be "a worthy mistress of the Hall" as he had said. Of course there was Rosamond. But he and Rosamond had not seemed on the best of terms any time she had seen them together. It struck her now how very seldom she had seen them together. Could the cause of the stiffness between them on those rare occasions be—? But no, it was out of the question. Rosamond was too honorable, too candid, too sincere. And yet, and yet . . . Why had Rosamond left Dinsley before Justin's return? Another week would not have made much difference to her mother, who, as far as could be judged, did not lavish over much affection on her daughter. Why had Rosamond not waited to see her? Suddenly as she thought the matter over the explanation of Rosamond's course of action flashed full upon Mrs. Craythorne. "It was what I should have expected, had I known how matters stood," she said to herself. "Rosamond has not yet disappointed me. She has acted wisely—at whatever cost to her-

self, poor child! . . . Poor child," she said again, remembering Justin's words.

Next morning brought letters from Mrs. Devine and Alex Carberry. The Colonel had had a relapse and was in a very precarious state. Alex wrote in a frenzy of grief and alarm, for the doctors had told her what a slight chance her father had of recovery, "I cannot face the thought of losing him," she wrote. "We have been so much to each other that I can never be glad again if anything happens to him. My whole life will be maimed. I can not write much now. This news has driven me crazy, yet I must keep a brave face for my darling and not let him know how I feel."

Mrs. Craythorne sent for Justin after reading these letters.

He entered the room where she sat alone, holding in her hand the letter from Alex.

"I know why you have sent for me, Aunt Helen," he said, with some constraint in look and tone; "you have heard from Alex."

"Yes—and you?"

"She has also written to me. Her father is dying."

"Poor Alex! She is demented with grief. She

loves her father so. Justin, you can not have the heart to write to her now as you intended? She has enough to bear just now."

"I don't really believe Alex cares very much. Her whole affection is centered in her father. But, as you say, it would be brutal to broach such a subject now."

"Then you will write her a kind, sympathetic note? Even if Rosamond has taken her place—" Justin started and looked at her keenly. "Even so, your old friendship for Alex is not yet destroyed."

Justin strode up and down the boudoir in silence.

"Has Rosamond told you?" he asked at length.

"No. I guessed."

"It was not—" he began and paused. "I may as well tell you all now," he continued after a moment. Then he threw back his head and laughed, boyishly, heartily.

Then he told her briefly what had occurred. "You see we are neither of us to blame, we could not help ourselves. I think I have always cared for her since she was a little girl in short frocks when I visited the Cape."

"And she?" Mrs. Craythorne was taking it very well, he thought.

"And she? Well, I don't know. I dare say it will take a couple of railway accidents to get information on the subject from her." He was boyishly exultant, knowing enough to satisfy him for the present.

CHAPTER XXV.

AT CLAREMONT.

"COME, mother dear, do try to take this. I made it myself, and Meta had nothing to do with it."

Rosamond put her hand under her mother's head, and raised her, and then held the cup to her lips.

The sick woman groaned with pain as she tried to move. Sorrow and illness had wrought fearful havoc on her, and Rosamond realized fully that her days were numbered.

"Metal" she gasped. "I've starved sooner than touch any of her dirty messes."

Rosamond had learned more in detail the account of her mother's life with Ridgway, and of her suffering since he had left her. Unable to keep on her feet, she had taken to her bed and was then at the mercy of the colored domestic. Rosamond knew the horror her mother always had of letting any of her colored servants cook for her, and knew that her present

prostrated state was due to semi-starvation because she would not take food prepared by Meta. Rosamond had a very good knowledge of cookery, and put it to good use now.

She had found her mother living in a small detached cottage in one of the back roads of Claremont. The house showed signs of neglect both inside and outside. The small strip of garden in front of it was a wilderness of sun-baked weeds, and indoors the state of things was no better.

Rosamond found a certain relief in the mechanical work of setting things in order. With the help of Nan and Meta she soon changed the aspect of matters domestic. Abbie—dear, faithful Abbie—had been her mother's only friend in all her trouble, and had visited her frequently before Rosamond came. She it was who had met and welcomed the lonely girl on her return to the Cape.

"You are changed, somehow, Rosamond," she had said after a prolonged scrutiny of her friend, "more serious—graver—and yet I don't know. You look a woman, and you went away a child."

Rosamond smiled at her. "I am a woman," she said.

"Oh, you must tell me *everything*," cried Abbie; "there's lots and piles, as we used to say as children, behind those dear eyes of yours. Who is he?"

Rosamond laughed, but unsteadily. "My dear Abbie!" she expostulated. And not then, nor until the march of events forced the information from her, did Rosamond speak.

To Rosamond her life in England and Ireland was now like a dream. She felt as though she had gone to sleep and dreamed it all, and waked to find herself beside her mother's sick-bed with the querulous, fretful voice bidding her do this and that in a thankless way familiar to her from childhood.

Yet the patience, the tenderness, the unwearied watchfulness and attention she lavished on her mother were not less than if they were not, even now, when death was about to part them—strangers yet.

The priest who visited her mother was kind to the lonely girl, and offered to send some of his "parish ladies" as he called them, to visit her. But Rosamond thanked him and declined. They would be kindly, she did not doubt, but in a condescending way she could not brook in her mood at the time.

Abbie, kept a household prisoner by Ian Grant the second, a baby boy of three months, could not come to her friend's aid as she desired, so Rosamond was left alone—too much alone—with the invalid. Mrs. Ridgway realized she was dying, but she clung to life with pitiable tenacity.

Her spirit—the masterful domineering spirit that had ruled Rosamond's childhood and youth, was only partly broken by the tyrant Ridgway. She recounted with extreme bitterness the indignities heaped upon her by him—she held forth until her breath failed on his vices. According to her, Ridgway was a fiend incarnate. To Rosamond the subject was infinitely distressing.

"Let us put him out of our thoughts altogether, mother dear," she entreated again and again, but the bitterness rankling at her mother's heart broke out afresh without any provocation.

"Your father had his failings, poor dear," she would say, "but he was a gentleman. Ridgway was not. He was . . . " and Rosamond would hear it all again.

They were straitened for money, too, in those days, and Rosamond took it upon herself to dismiss Meta. Nan Maguire, who was Rosamond's devoted slave, declared she wanted no

wages until Miss Rosamond could give them to her.

"Sure it's proud I am to be any use to ye, Miss Rosamond, jewel. It's yourself will be payin' me in a lump sum one of them days. An' if ye don't, sure what does it matter at all, at all? I'm glad that black nigger's gone, an' that's God's truth. She'd an evil eye in her head, an' she stole what you didn't give her, if she'd be wantin' or no. Sure we'll be grand entirely now, if your mother could pick up a bit of strength. But sure, God's will be done, the poor lady!"

And Rosamond, because the broad northern brogue brought back the dear, happy days in the far-away Glen, was glad of Nan's presence. The spirit of faith and trust in God helped the lonely, dispirited girl in the face of all her trials.

"There's a gentleman at the door, Miss Rosamond, askin' to see ye," said Nan one day, some six weeks after her arrival.

"Show him in, Nan. Did he give no name?"

"Sorra' a wan, miss. But he's as fine a lookin' man as ye'd see anywhere."

Rosamond laughed. Her mother was out of pain to-day, and the sunshine was somehow sweeter, and the oaks outside of the house seemed

greener and life looked brighter because of that.

"Oh, Nan, Nan, 'tis you have the eye for the men," she said roguishly.

"Who is it, Rosamond?" asked her mother. "Perhaps it's some of your grand English friends."

For a moment Rosamond's heart stopped beating and she looked at her mother in a startled way.

"Nan," she said sharply, "is it—is it any one you know? Any one from England?"

"No, then it isn't, and more's the pity. Sure I'd dance an Irish jig if His Honor would come to the door. But it's not him, miss. He's a stranger."

Rosamond sighed as if relieved. "I will go myself. The gentleman, whoever he is, will think little of our manners, I fear."

She went hastily to the hall door, and standing there she found Alan Craig.

"Oh, it is you!" she said gaily, putting out her hand and smiling welcome. "Do please come in. Our little Irish maid did not know you and we seldom have visitors. When did you come down?"

She led the way into the tiny sitting-room which, Alan noted, was more shabbily furnished than No. 8 Dunstable Street.

"I arrived last night, and found out your address from Mrs. Grant. I was sorry to hear from her that your mother is ill."

"Very seriously ill," said Rosamond gravely. "The doctors fear the worst."

"I am sorry. You came back from England sooner than you intended?"

"Yes, because of my mother." She could not bring herself to speak of Ridgway to Alan, and if he knew the facts of the case he made no sign.

"Tell me of yourself" she continued, hastily. "You are prospering in Rhodesia?" His looks, his tone, his whole bearing told her he was.

Mentally she contrasted his present appearance with that he wore the first day she saw him. Then, crushed in spirit, and wearing the look of one of life's failures, a companion in labor of colored hirelings, a victim of his own weakness—now a man in every sense of the word—and one with whom life had prospered, who looked his weakness in the face and conquered it.

He answered with pardonable pride the question she had put.

"The farm is my own now," he said. "Of course there is a mortgage on it, but that will all

be paid off before this time next year. I am having plans made for a new house."

He looked at her to see the effect of his words.

"For the new mistress of the farm?" she asked with a little laugh.

"Rosamond, I came to-day in hope . . . " Somehow the very friendliness of her voice, her look, checked him.

"I thought we had done with all that?" she said quietly. "You must not waste the best years of your life waiting. There are far better women in the world—women more suited for you than I."

"Is there no hope for me, then?"

"We can always be friends. We must always be that at least," she said. "But I shall never marry."

He looked at her searchingly. "Then there is some one else?"

Rosamond felt the color burn in her cheeks for a moment. Then she looked frankly at him. "Yes," she said, "there is some one else, but—as I said, I shall never marry."

"Forget him, Rosamond! I will spend all my life—I will do all that man can do to make you happy!"

Rosamond quietly checked the passionate outburst, and before Alan left her he was outwardly calm as when he came.

"I may come and see you, until I leave for Rhodesia?"

"If you will promise to consider this vexed question as settled now and forever, I shall be very glad to see you," returned Rosamond.

His face changed suddenly. "No—I can not promise that. It isn't in human nature not to speak—it isn't in my nature anyhow. So—good-by—good-by and God bless you!"

He was gone swiftly down the oak-shaded road toward the station.

"I do hope," said Rosamond as she turned away, "I do hope he will meet some nice girl who will keep him straight, and make him comfortable in the new house on the farm."

She was distressed about Alan during the next few days, but her mother's illness took an alarming turn, and anxiety for her drove Alan Craig from Rosamond's thoughts.

The girl knew her mother was dying, and while she did all in her power to make her last days peaceful, her own thoughts were constantly reverting to her grief at her father's death and reproach-

ing herself for her too light sorrow now. And yet there was genuine sorrow in her heart. Her mother had loved her after a fashion of her own. Was it the fault of either that they had always misunderstood each other? It had been the heaviest trial of Rosamond's life, and who shall say that it was not a cause of grief to her mother?

A strange gentleness came over the dying woman at the last, and Rosamond felt nearer to her than during her nineteen years of life. Mrs. Ridgway received the last sacraments and seemed for a day or two to rally; but it was the last feint of Death waiting to surprise her at the end. The end came one summer dawn when the strange glories of a new day were making a splendor in the sky.

Together Abbie and Rosamond knelt beside the bed—Rosamond's faltering voice trying to recite the prayer for the dying. Very peacefully the end came, and Rosamond, with an unnatural calmness, kissed the lips and brow, murmuring, "Mother, forgive me." She felt her shortcomings as a daughter with painful intensity in the light of that deathbed scene.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRESPASSER.

"ROSAMOND! Rosamond! Where are you? Oh, here! I have such a surprise for you. Guess who has written to me?"

Abbie—the excitable Abbie of old—rushed down the beach at Muizenberg waving her sunshade wildly at her friend who was seated on the rocks reading.

Ian Grant had taken a house at the seaside for the month of January, and Abbie had insisted on her friend accompanying them there. Rosamond only agreed on condition of being allowed to come as a paying guest, but of this both Abbie and Ian would not hear. So with her faithful Nan Maguire, who refused to leave "her darlin' Miss Rosamond," she went with them.

She had a passion for the sea, and in the sad and lonely hours that followed her mother's death, she found her solace on the rocks watching its ever-changing beauty.

It was high summer, and the little seaside

place was full of fashionable visitors—wealthy refugees from Johannesburg and such of the local aristocracy as were wont to patronize the sea-side in the season.

But of these Rosamond knew nothing. She generally selected a sheltered nook half-way between Muizenberg and St. James and close to the house the Grants had rented.

Here with her work and a book she would sit for the long sunny hours, sometimes alone, sometimes with Abbie, or again with Nan and Ian II. as he was called—Abbie's baby boy, of whom Nan was devotedly fond.

Abbie never tired of listening to her praises of the child, adorned with Irish extravagances of diction, but genuine as her Irish heart.

On this day, Rosamond had been alone and she started from a day-dream of rather sad calibre, judging by her expression, when Abbie's wildly-excited cry reached her.

"What has happened? Is anything wrong? Who has written to you?" she asked in a startled fashion as Abbie came up breathlessly.

"A friend of yours," gasped Abbie, sinking on the rocks beside her, and fanning herself with her hat. Her curls fluttered in the breeze and she

looked not at all like a young matron. Abbie explained her unmatronly look by saying that other people "settled down" when they married, and she did not.

"A friend—of—mine?" echoed Rosamond, growing paler. "Who can it be? Do tell me, Abbie dear! It is horrible to be in suspense."

"Well—there! Read for yourself," said Abbie, laughingly thrusting the envelope into Rosamond's hands. "And I must say you *might* have told *me*."

"Might have told you what? Oh!" Rosamond recognized Mrs. Craythorne's handwriting. "Does she write to you often? I did not know."

"No, she does not. The letter is all about you. She wants your address, and hints very strongly that Sir Justin wants it too."

Abbie's eyes were worlds of reproach as she ceased fanning herself and delivered these words seriously.

"I must say you are a perfect oyster, Rosamond, not to have told me about it."

"About what, dear? There is nothing to tell—nothing really." Rosamond took out the letter with hands that trembled as sharp-eyed Abbie noted.

"Here, give me the letter and I will read it! Look, you are trembling all over! And yet, you dear old ostrich, you think you are hiding—hiding from me!" She laughed and began to read, while Rosamond, with a hand on either hot cheek, sat and listened.

Mrs. Craythorne was diplomatic. She wanted Rosamond's present address, giving as her reason that she wished to let her know of Colonel Carberry's death in France. She (Rosamond) had met the Carberrys while in England, and Alex Carberry had been engaged to Justin.

"Note the tense, my dear," said Abbie, at this point. "*Had been* not *is*. Probably the engagement is at an end."

"That is probably a slip of the pen," quoth Rosamond.

"Slip of your grandmother! Excuse me, dear, I am rude, but really you would try the patience of Job. Now you are going to answer these questions. Number one: Justin did not care for this Miss Carberry?

"Yes, he did. At least he *liked* her."

"But he loved some one else, and that some one was you? I will let you off the answer of that, for it is written large upon your face. Number

three: You left England because you did not want him to break off his engagement to Miss Carberry?"

"Ye—es," said Rosamond, and then "Oh, let me off the rest, do dear!"

"Now, or never! Remember *I'm* your guardian now, dearie. Number four: Miss Carberry would not break her heart if the engagement ended?"

"Now, how should I know?"

"Fairly well. She was a very devoted daughter, you told me. Now, which was dearer, do you think, Justin or her father?"

"Her father."

"I knew it!" cried the inquisitor with a triumphant laugh. "Number five: Mrs. Craythorne had set her heart on Justin marrying Miss Carberry?"

"Of course."

"And you felt *de trop*, and came away, in spite of Justin?"

"Yes."

"Poor Justin! I'm going to write to him, Rosamond!" There were very imps of mischief in Abbie's eyes, as Rosamond looked at her in a startled way.

"Don't do anything foolish!" she entreated. "Justin will marry Alex Carberry and she will make him a very good wife," she added with fine impartiality that did not for one moment deceive her friend.

"I never do foolish things," returned Abbie, rising, "at least, not often. Come home now, dear. It is nearly time for Ian's train to come in."

Abbie kept her word. She wrote at great length to Justin by the following mail, Rosamond watching her, half in fear and half in amusement the while. She wrote also to Mrs. Craythorne giving her the desired information and something over.

"There!" she exclaimed, waving her pen triumphantly when she had finished, "if that does not do it, I don't know what will."

"Do what, Abbie?" asked Rosamond. But Abbie shook her head mysteriously, and laughed.

"It's been Justin since you were eleven, and it will be Justin till you are one hundred—and after," she said.

"Oh, Abbie!" protested Rosamond.

"Oh, Rosamond Bridget!" laughed Abbie,

going out to get her letters posted. There was not any use in ringing a bell, for the only black domestic she had was deep in the mysteries of cooking, and Nan was down on the beach with Ian II.

Two weeks passed and the Grants returned to their home in Rosebank.

Then came a letter from Mrs. Delaney, who had received news of Rosamond's sudden departure from Dinsley Park, and later of her mother's death. Mrs. Delaney urged Rosamond to join her in Belgium.

At the end of the letter, she wrote:

"By the way, I met Alex Carberry and her aunt, Mrs. Devine, the other day. Both are in deep mourning for the Colonel, who died in France. Alex is in great grief. She was a devoted daughter and her father's death seems to have changed her a great deal.

"She told me that she had broken off her engagement with Justin, and was making a Retreat, preparatory to joining one of the sisterhoods in Belgium. She says that it has always been her true vocation, but to please her father she consented to be engaged to Justin. I asked her if he took his dismissal quietly, but she said she

did not know, as he must have only just received her letter.

"She really looks half a nun already, and I do hope Justin will not feel the blow too much. What do you think?"

Mrs. Delaney concluded by again pressing Rosamond to come to her and enclosed a large cheque for her traveling expenses.

Rosamond sat like one in a dream after reading this letter. She was in the pretty garden adjoining the Grants' house, and presently, Abbie, followed by Nan and the baby, joined her. The day was hot, but the hedge of oaks near which they sat made a cool shade.

"Abbie, Aunt Grace wants me to go to Belgium to her," said Rosamond, starting from her day dream, as Abbie drew up a chair beside her.

"H'm. To Belgium? I don't know if you ought. Has she news of Justin?"

"She met Alex Carberry and her aunt," said Rosamond, pulling a spray of oak leaves to pieces.

Abbie looked at her sharply.

"Go on," she said quietly, "there's more."

"Yes, there's more. Alex has broken off her engagement."

"Good girl," said Abbie, approvingly. "Has she retreated in good order?"

Abbie's remarks at this period were apt to smack of the military, for the war was in progress.

Rosamond smiled. "Alex is going to be a nun—or perhaps is one by this time."

"A nun! Is it so bad as that?"

"Bad! you think she is entering a convent through some disappointment, because Justin—?"

"Yes, is it not so?"

"What queer notions you have of nuns, Abbie, though they were your teachers for years! Can you not imagine a girl young and pretty, gay too, and full of life, making a sacrifice of the world and giving her life to work and prayer in a convent? I have often wished I had such a vocation. Of course, Alex Carberry—I wish you knew her and then you would not think anything less than very strong principle would cause her to do a thing like that."

"But—did she break off the engagement or did he?" pursued Abbie, who was not readily convinced.

"Alex did. And as far as I can glean from Aunt Grace's letter, Justin had taken no steps

toward such an issue up to the time Alex wrote him."

"Well, however it be, it is a good thing for Justin, and—for you," said Abbie.

"For me?" echoed Rosamond.

"Yes, for you, Miss Innocence. You will be Lady Fortescue-Lyddon, and goodness me, will you ever cast an eye, as Nan says, on the likes of me again?"

"Nonsense, Abbie!" said Rosamond.

"Bide a wee," said Abbie.

A week passed and neither of them made any reference to Mrs. Delaney's letter.

Rosamond could not decide about going to her aunt. She was, of course, the girl's only living relative, and there was no obstacle now in the way of Rosamond's accepting a home with her. Yet she hesitated, she scarcely knew why.

Mail day was approaching again and Rosamond carried her writing materials out to a table under the trees.

"I am going to write to Aunt Grace," she told Abbie as she passed her. "Let Nan bring the boy down to me under the trees."

Abbie stopped working her machine and looked at her.

"You are going to Belgium, then?"

"I think it is best, do you not?"

"Of course I can send him on, but I do wish you'd wait just a week or two longer."

"Send him on! What do you mean, Abbie?"

"Sir Justin Fortescue-Lyddon, of course. He's bound to come looking for you."

"Really, Abbie!" expostulated Rosamond.

"Oh, go and write to your aunt, like a dutiful niece!" said Abbie, and whir-r-r went the machine.

"I hope he will come this week," said Abbie to herself, "though it is too much to expect."

Meanwhile Rosamond selected a shady nook close to the plumbago hedge which separated the garden from the road beyond. It was a short lane, in reality, leading down from the main road, and bordered on one side by oaks and on the other by plumbago bushes in blossom.

Rosamond gathered a bunch of the pale blue flowers and put them in her belt, where they gave a touch of light to her somber gown. Nan and the baby were within sight and Rosamond idly watched them playing before she began to write. Then with an air of resolution she took up her

pen and wrote the letter which somehow seemed of much moment to her, because it defined the future to a great extent.

"Come, Nan, bring baby here!" she called after addressing and stamping the envelope. "I shall not see much of him after a week's time or you either. We are going to the Continent, Nan, you and I."

"And sure what would we be after going there for, Miss Rosamond, honey?" asked Nan, looking bewildered.

"We are going to 'The Mistress,'" said Rosamond. The Glen folk always called her aunt, "The Mistress."

"Glory be! But it's the gran' gallivantin we do be havin' Miss Rosamond, agra."

"Think of all you will have to tell to Rosie and Shamus and little Larry when you get home to the Glen!" said Rosamond.

"Sure 'twill be like a fairy tale to them all," Nan said.

"Give me baby, Nan. What shall we do without him, you and I, Nan?"

She took the child in her arms. The baby had Abbie's sunny temper and was a merry wee morsel of humanity.

"He fairly dotes on you, Miss Rosamond. Look how the wee arms of him go round your neck!" cried Nan, watching the two of them in huge delight.

And indeed they made a pretty picture in the sun-flecked shadow of the trees. And so evidently thought a man who came down the unfrequented lane, looking searchingly at the few houses it contained.

Suddenly, she scarcely knew why, Rosamond turned and saw him.

"Mavourneen!"

"You—oh, you!"

Justin laughed. It was a pleasant thing to see her joy.

"The gate is a little further down," said she breathlessly.

"Can't wait for gates," said he. "Just stand back a little. I'm going to jump."

And jump he did.

Nan rescued the baby.

"Glory be to God!" she cried, "Sure it's 'His Honor' himself that's in it!"

And she retreated precipitately. About half an hour later Abbie, who was consumed with curiosity, ventured into the garden. Rosa-

mond saw her coming through the trees, trying to look unconscious.

"Of course you have not met Abbie since she was in short frocks. I shall have to introduce you," said Rosamond to Justin.

"I don't think it will be necessary. Abbie is still Abbie—only I must call her Mrs. Grant, now, I suppose."

"Abbie," said Rosamond, "this is Justin."

"A trespasser, Mrs. Grant, on your lands. Shall I be prosecuted?" He took the hand she offered.

"That depends!" returned Abbie, laughing. "If there's theft also, of course that makes the case more serious!" she looked at them with quizzical eyes.

"Congratulate me, Mrs. Grant, before you prosecute me," laughed Justin.

"I do most heartily. What a march you stole on us! And you have just come in the nick of time, for this fair lady was thinking of running away to her relative in Belgium."

"We won't go so far for our honeymoon, shall we, Rosamond? If Gordon's Bay is still in existence, it will serve."

"Delightful!" said Abbie.

"Pinch me, Abbie," said Rosamond gaily.

"I feel as if I were dreaming."

"Then may you never awake, dear," said Abbie.

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